

FAO Statement for the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting 2020

FAO firmly believes that transformational change continues to be required in the way humanitarian crises are approached. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting almost all countries around the globe, this systemic change is needed more than ever. In 2019, before the outbreak of COVID-19, 135 million people in 55 countries experienced acute hunger requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above)¹. Out of these 135 million, more than 27 million people were in emergency levels of acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 4). One step before famine. One small shock could be enough to push them into catastrophe and COVID-19 is not a small shock. 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.

The Grand Bargain has stimulated substantial normative and operational change in the provision of a more efficient and effective humanitarian response streamlining action towards one overarching goal: a more efficient aid delivery, freeing up human and financial resources for the direct benefit of affected populations. Whilst the urgency to prepare and respond to COVID-19 is improving the efficiency and the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, many of the actions accelerated by the pandemic are also well aligned with the long-term commitments outlined in the Grand Bargain. These efforts we are experiencing today need to be maintained once the pandemic will be behind us.

With its double-mandate, FAO has worked for decades 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 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 2019 FAO devoted efforts on the participation revolution. FAO ran a highly interactive and practical **global awareness raising campaign on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation (PSEA)** at Regional Office level to build capacities and enhance staff knowledge. Additionally, FAO established a PSEA and AAP Focal Point network to foster exchange and dialogue among countries for institutional knowledge building and the exchange of good practices.

In 2019, FAO has continued to invest in strengthening the capacities of national partners and staff and partners on **gender equality mainstreaming** in quality programming, addressing also Gender-based Violence (GBV) in agriculture, AAP, PSEA, and how to design and implement a gender-responsive Disaster Risk Reduction plan or project. FAO monitored and assessed gender impacts in conflicts and disaster risk management and early warning in selected countries, by including the gender dimensions in needs assessments and collecting sex and age-disaggregated data for resilience and vulnerability analysis. The

¹ [2020 Global Report on Food Crises](#)

Organization also participated with the UN Rome-based agencies and other international partners in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence under the umbrella of the Generation Equality campaign, by organizing a series of awareness raising events and exchanging lessons learned and available approaches to protect men, women and children from GBV.

Significant results were achieved in 2019 in mainstreaming the **Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus**. One example is its work on **social protection**. FAO continued to strengthen its support to countries in the design and risk informed and shock responsive Social Protection (SP). This included, enhancing linkages with early warning systems, as well as furthering linkages and developing joint projects with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Smart-Agriculture (CSA) activities. FAO has also continued to build on the evidence around social protection, cash-based interventions and resilience. FAO also provided support to the development of proposals under the SDG Fund linking Social Protection and climate risk, started to develop projects around SP and CSA, and developed a strategy on Social Protection and Early Warning Early Action (EWEA).

Conflict analysis is another example of FAO's efforts to mainstream the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus. In collaboration with Interpeace, FAO developed the *Programme Clinic: Designing conflict-sensitive interventions*, a structured participatory analysis to identify and integrate "conflict-sensitive" strategies into the design and implementation of FAO interventions. The objective is to minimise the risk of any negative or harmful impacts, as well as maximise any positive contributions towards strengthening and consolidating conditions for sustainable local peace. The *Programme Clinic* is designed in a way that empowers staff from the decentralised offices to facilitate the process effectively without needing to rely on external expert facilitation. It is an intuitive multi-step process that enables participants to effectively engage in conflict-sensitive analysis and design thinking even if they have no previous training in conflict sensitivity. The process itself, when done effectively, has a secondary effect of building greater awareness of and competence in conflict-sensitive thinking in those participating in Programme Clinics.

Since its creation, the Grand Bargain, bringing together donors, NGOs and UN agencies, has been an exceptional catalyst for structural change in the way the humanitarian arena approaches and delivers aid. FAO, as well as all the others GB signatories, is exerting corporate efforts to be part of this change, to fulfill the GB commitments and embrace its spirit. With its initial 5-year term coming to an end, we believe it is now time to evaluate the progress achieved so far. We encourage such evaluation to take into consideration similar existing fora (e.g. the results groups of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee) and assess both the complementarities and duplication. FAO believes that the Grand Bargain should stay agile, evolve with time and be adjusted to the context in which the humanitarian system is working. Therefore, we fully support a revision of its overall process with the aim of distilling down the workstreams and commitments, and simplifying its existing reporting process.