

Grand Bargain in 2020:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **5 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

Grand Bargain in 2020

Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2020?

- **Risk Communication and Community Engagement.** With the onset of COVID-19 and in line with the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) commitments, FAO, together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and national authorities, supported the design and implementation of “Risk Communication and Community Engagement” (RCCE) initiatives. Marginalized groups in rural contexts often lack access to food security support, surveillance systems, health services as well as accurate information. RCCE initiatives support the most vulnerable in making informed decisions, promoting healthy behaviours and preventing the spread of COVID-19. For example, in Pakistan, information, education and communications materials were translated into local languages and displayed in supermarkets, local food shops, and other public places that were equally accessible to women and men. Health and physical distancing guidelines are also being shared remotely via radio broadcast, WhatsApp, and social media channels.
- **Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus.** The Global Network against Food Crises¹ provides coherent coordination to promote collective efforts across the HDP nexus. Through the Network, FAO, WFP and the EU are jointly promoting consensual, harmonized and country-owned food insecurity, resilience and risk analyses monitoring of contexts (countries and regions) at risk of food crises to inform timely decision making and advocacy for action. To do so, in 2020, the Global Network launched the i) [Global Report on Food Crises](#), which was updated in September to reflect the impacts of COVID-19; ii) the [IGAD Regional Report of Food Crises](#); iii) two issues of the Global EWEA reports; iv) two editions of the FAO-WFP early warning analysis of acute food insecurity hotspots; v) the seventh edition of the “Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations”. FAO has also undertaken an evaluation of its work to-date across the HDP nexus, which will facilitate more explicit and enhanced programming across the nexus to address the root causes of acute hunger and reduce humanitarian needs.

Question 2: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment² in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results). Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

¹ The Global Network against Food Crises was founded by the European Commission for International Cooperation and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) at the first World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. More information available [here](#).

² Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

The Grand Bargain has significantly contributed to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian settings, with a focus on rural communities, through greater joined-up and integrated work including gender transformative approaches. With the COVID-19 pandemic, much of FAO's focus during 2020 converged to understand how containment measures posed new challenges to rural women with regard to their roles in maintaining household food security, as agricultural producers, farm managers, processors, traders, wage workers and entrepreneurs.

Drawing from the experiences and lessons of past health crises, FAO embarked on robust needs assessment and gender analysis, alongside the preparation of policy briefs to inform gender-responsive planning and mitigation strategies. These helped identify and address existing inequalities and gaps and strengthen national capacities to better target the specific impacts of the crisis on women and girls, particularly in rural communities. Data collected was disaggregated by sex, age, and disability, to produce the evidence base for gender-responsive planning and monitoring gender-related impacts.

In addition to the RCCE interventions mentioned, which targeted equally men and women, the Dimitra Clubs represent one of FAO's flagship community-led approaches to facilitate rural women and men's empowerment and advance gender equality. Through these self-help groups, rural women and men determine ways to trigger social and economic transformations in their respective communities, by using their own local resources and collective efforts and without relying on external support.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Dimitra Clubs have been spontaneously mobilizing and sensitizing rural communities on behavioural changes to prevent the virus transmission, including prevention measures, improved access to trusted information, networking with other Clubs' leaders, door-to-door sensitization, training on making efficient masks and washing basins available, while also ensuring the socio-economic empowerment and resilience of rural women and men.

Question 3: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments? Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

During 2020 FAO has been working to better understand what the HDP Nexus means for the Organization, both strategically and programmatically, with a focus on improved integration of the 'peace' element in FAO country activities:

- Using FAO's conflict-sensitivity Programme Clinic ³ approach in Kyrgyzstan (February/March 2020) to inform programme design regarding natural resources.
- Given COVID-19, adapting the Programme Clinic into a virtual format, using a combination of online platforms, in English and French, with the first online Programme Clinic held in September/October 2020 in French for the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger).
- Co-authoring and [publishing](#) "Issue paper: Exploring peace within the Humanitarian-Development- Peace Nexus (HDPN)" under IASC Results Group 4.
- Development of an internal compendium for FAO country offices to support the formulation of UN Peacebuilding (PBF) projects, and projects with explicit sustaining peace objectives.

³ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7494en/ca7494en.pdf>

- Finalization of *Operationalizing Pathways to Sustaining Peace: a How to Guide*, to be published in 2021, developed in conjunction with Interpeace and building off the thematic paper [Pathways to sustaining peace at FAO](#) submitted to the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) in January 2020 as a contribution to the 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.
- Area-based context analyses (supported by [FAO's Guide to Context Analysis](#)), supported in a number of contexts including Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Somalia (with Interpeace), Somaliland, Sudan, South Sudan, the Philippines, and the Central Sahel.
- FAO's Office for Evaluation undertook an *Evaluation of FAO's contributions to the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus 2015-2019*, which will be finalized and published in 2021 and presented to FAO's Governing Bodies.

The evaluation will provide strategic guidance in terms of what remains to be achieved within the context of the HDPN in the coming years, as will the framing of the new FAO Strategic Framework (2022-2031), currently under development. Roll-out of the guide to operationalizing pathways to sustaining peace will be a major focus in 2021, as well as integrating approaches in MEAL frameworks.

Grand Bargain 2016-2020: Overall achievements and remaining gaps

Question 4: What are the 2-3 key achievements/areas of most progress by your institution since 2016? Please report on your institutional progress for the period 2016-2020, **even** if your institution did not become a signatory until after 2016.

- **Cash and Voucher Assistance.** Between 2016 and 2020, the annual volume of resources transferred through cash and vouchers has almost tripled, going from less than USD 25 million in 2016 to over USD 70 million in 2020. While in 2016 only 20 countries were using cash and voucher assistance, in 2019 this figure expanded to 33. In addition, since 2016, FAO has developed a Manual on Cash and Vouchers⁴, as well as rolling out several system-based qualifiers and tools to track projects using cash and voucher modalities. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic further spurred FAO into digitalizing cash transfers.
- **Anticipatory Actions.** Since 2015, FAO has been actively engaged in the mainstreaming of an anticipatory approach to food crises, in close coordination with governments, development and humanitarian partners. Between 2016 and 2020, anticipatory action systems have been set up in more than 40 countries where weather extremes and human-induced hazards pose a threat to lives, livelihoods and food security. FAO, together with OCHA continued co-chairing the IASC ENSO Analytical Cell, which oversees [the Standard Operating Procedures for Early Action to El Niño/La Niña Episodes](#). Furthermore, FAO has been working closely with OCHA and partners over the past 3 years to advocate for the mainstreaming of anticipatory action within the CERF. This has resulted in the launch of OCHA-CERF Anticipatory Action pilots in a number of countries. The FAO funding window for Anticipatory Action has increased by 36% between 2018 and 2020.

Question 5: What, in your institutional view, have been the main achievements of the Grand Bargain signatories, as a collective, since 2016? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or

⁴ The FAO Manual on Vouchers is under development.

workstreams where you think most progress has been made collectively by signatories.

Since its creation in 2016, the Grand Bargain has been a catalyst for change. Through its Annual Report and in light of the 51 commitments, the Grand Bargain exercised the pressure needed to change and improve the way the humanitarian system works. In terms of work streams, we believe the main achievement as a collective have been recorded in the field of:

- **Cash and voucher assistance:** the amount of USD transferred through these modalities has significantly increased since 2016, as demonstrated also by the independent ODI Annual Reports. COVID-19 has accelerated even further the changes needed to fine-tune these modalities (e.g. use of only electronic vouchers).
- **Anticipatory action:** the system is shifting towards interventions aiming at preventing the impacts of potential crises. The tangible results of this shift are the growing partnerships and funding mechanisms (e.g. CERF Anticipatory Action window) for anticipatory actions.

Question 6: What has the Grand Bargain not been able to achieve in its five year tenure? What outstanding obstacles, gaps, areas of weakness still remain after five years, in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think there remain key gaps or obstacles.

- **Lack of financial resources.** In general, food crises received a limited proportion of official development assistance compared with international humanitarian assistance between 2016 and 2018, especially crises that were protracted in nature.
- **Multi-year funding decreasing.** Multi-year funding has decreased in both absolute and relative terms between 2017 and 2020.

Risk and the Grand Bargain

Question 7a: How has risk (financial, operational, reputational, etc) affected your institution's implementation of the core commitments since you became a signatory to the Grand Bargain?

Over the last 5 years, FAO's risk management approach has been strengthened towards a more coherent and holistic approach to risk. Risk registers have been introduced and have been completed by country offices, an IT tool has been developed and awareness-raising sessions have taken place.

FAO's implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments (along with other internal and external factors) has contributed to making FAO humanitarian assistance more relevant, accountable, transparent, effective and efficient. This has also contributed to change the risk profile and exposure to risks of FAO operations, introducing new technologies and innovations to mitigate risks, for example, as they relate to cash transfers. Appropriate mitigation and risk-sharing strategies have also been developed and mainstreamed in the Organization's policies, rules and procedures along the way.

The risk of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian response is of common concern to the humanitarian aid sector and in the implementation of FAO's core commitments,

this has required the relentless application of Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policy framework, strengthened training and awareness-raising of staff and increased consideration within risk assessment, programming, implementation and response.

Question 7b: How has your institution sought to mitigate or address these risks to enable implementation of the core commitments?

FAO applies a zero-tolerance policy towards Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and is committed to creating and maintaining a harmonious work environment and combating all forms of harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority and SEA. FAO has emphasized a series of substantive policy and programming initiatives with related learning tools and awareness-raising, including the roll-out of mandatory training, the creation of a PSEA country focal point network and increased technical support and outreach, including the creation of a digital platform to promote the exchange of good practices. Furthermore, the Organization is focusing on strengthening the organizational culture by reinforcing awareness about these crucial topics as well as the structures in place to ensure any concerns are handled in line with best practice, policies and procedures.

Various measures have been implemented by FAO since 2016 to meet its Grand Bargain commitments as they relate to cash transfer and voucher assistance, including the strengthening of its capacities, the development of corporate procedures and regulations, the investment in linking cash transfer and FAO's support to social protection, to name a few. Additionally, appropriate risk prevention and mitigation tools have been developed or integrated into existing or new policies, procedures and programmes on the use of Cash and Voucher Assistance. The implementation of Grand Bargain commitments has changed the risk profile of FAO activities (for instance, moving from in-kind assistance to a more systematic consideration of Cash transfers and Vouchers has reduced FAO's exposure to some risks while increasing it in other areas). Internal and external collaboration has led to the development and increased use of appropriate de-risking and risk-sharing tools and approaches. Examples include the use of electronic and digital entitlements for cash and vouchers, financial tools, legal instruments, partnerships, automation of internal system controls and qualifiers, increased use of Management Information Systems in field operations and capacity development initiatives.