RESPONDING TO FAMINE IN SOUTH SUDAN
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THE CRISIS The Republic of South Sudan, the youngest nation in the world, is in a major humanitarian, development, economic and security crises of unprecedented proportions. Around 7.5 million people are estimated to need humanitarian assistance. About 4.9 million persons are “severely food insecure,” with Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal and Unity States most affected. Conflict has forced more than a quarter of the population to flee their homes, disrupted crop production, and destroyed livestock. It has also gravely compromised access to people who need help. Access to food has been further affected by a collapsing economy and massive price increases for basic food items. The current crisis yet again highlights the drivers of conflict: deep-rooted mutual suspicion, disregard for rule of law, lack of institutions to resolve disputes, and widespread economic deprivation.

OUR APPROACH Recovery and stabilization require addressing immediate needs and restoring community trust to get people back to work and providing for themselves and their families without assistance. Together, these measures will help prevent and mitigate food insecurity and long-term humanitarian aid dependency in South Sudan. Given the chronic nature of food insecurity and malnutrition, promoting and producing nutritious foods locally is vital. Agriculture sector development—with a focus on building household resilience to food, price, and other shocks—must take priority. Small markets and community-level infrastructure will also help bridge gaps in rural communities suffering higher levels of poverty. UNDP is further addressing acute poverty by creating more sources of income, including microenterprises, livelihoods, and vocational training. Through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Regional Initiative for Capacity Enhancement in South Sudan, administered by UNDP, eight civil service officers from Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia have been deployed in state and national ministries of agriculture in the towns of Yambio, Torit, Juba, and Wau.

UNDP’S RESPONSE TO FOOD INSECURITY UNDP South Sudan, with UNICEF, FAO, and WFP, are well advanced with their integrated recovery and resilience oriented area-based programme to address the food insecurity in Aweil. The joint initiative to build community resilience against the multiple shocks in South Sudan includes promotion of food security, generation of sustainable livelihoods and reinvigorating the local economy while restoring basic services and strengthening community security, peace and social cohesion in targeted areas. Additionally, as the recovery and stabilization programme has a nation-wide vision, UNDP is expanding to Western Equatoria (Yambio) for better ethnic and geographic balance in terms of choice of locations.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS UNDP’s response efforts have already led to promising early results in supporting recovery and stabilization:

- Youth and women in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Western Equatoria regions have received livelihoods opportunities and emergency employment through the establishment of the Aweil Community Women’s Market as well as provision of support to 15 women-led small businesses and incentivization of production and exchange at the local levels. 60 market management committee members and beneficiaries will receive training to ensure sustainability of the market.
- Micro and small scale enterprises supported youth and women entrepreneurs in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Western Equatoria
- UNDP has conducted a rapid market assessment in Yambio, demonstrating the need for the provision of carpentry, metal works and agriculture skills in particular.
- Men and women in Northern Bahr el Ghazal have been reached through stakeholder engagement, workshops, street dramas and radio talk shows on transparency, accountability and participation to promote civic engagement, enhancing demand for essential service delivery

WAY FORWARD IN 2017

- 150 men and women in Yambio and Aweil will receive entrepreneurship skills training; 30 will receive business advisory training. An additional 45 traditional leaders and youth as well as 45 women in Aweil will receive training on leadership skills; including participatory planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. 25 representatives of civil society organizations will receive Trainers of Trainees training on social accountability
- UNDP has identified a facility for vocational skills training centre in Yambio as well as 75 beneficiaries (half of them women) to start with sustainable livelihood skills training in September to address the unemployment of women and youth in the area. UNDP is also planning to renovate the Aweil Women’s Centre.

UNDP SOUTH SUDAN In addition to the joint UN programme in Aweil, UNDP’s Integrated Crisis Response Programme aims to support recovery and stabilization and lay a strong foundation for national reconciliation and sustainable development over the long term through the following:

- Promoting Access to Justice and Rule of Law This programme provides support to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) survivors and other vulnerable groups; helps with community policing; provides trauma management and psycho-social support; and promotes civic education on transitional justice. Seven Justice and Confidence Centers have been established, through which legal services and advice have helped some 70,000 people. Peace mediation conferences led to 10 community-level peace agreements.

- Livelihood Restoration and Support to Micro-Enterprises: This programme supports rapid business recovery, restores local markets, and provides skills development and income support. A market for women is under construction in Rejaf County, an area neighboring Juba which has seen an influx of displaced people relocating due to insecurity, to help restore community-level food supply. This new vegetable market will comprise 72 stalls, toilet blocks, a vegetable washing area, an elevated water tank, and a solar lighting system. It is expected to serve approximately 9,000 residents.

- Peace-Building and Reconciliation This programme comprises peace messaging and a public awareness campaign, a national consultative dialogue, high-level diplomacy, and measures to enhance community interdependence. An estimated 6 million people so far have been reached with peace and reconciliation messages, using media such as SMS, an interactive radio programme, participatory theatre, and public debates.

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