



*Empowered lives.
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BUSINESS CASE ASSESSMENT FOR

Accelerating Development Investments in Famine Response and Prevention

CASE STUDY

YEMEN





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REPORT PREPARED FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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1. INTRODUCTION: YEMEN ON THE BRINK OF CATASTROPHE

Yemen is today in its third year of a complex and brutal conflict, with no end in sight. The human impact of the violence and destabilization it has engendered has been devastating – and is getting worse. Over 20.7 million people (over 75 percent of the population) require humanitarian assistance and protection, with 9.8 million requiring urgent life-saving assistance.

Over 2 million are currently displaced, cut off from their homes, livelihoods and access to services, acute malnutrition has reached emergency levels (with close to 3.3 million people affected), and a cholera outbreak has further compounded the humanitarian situation. In this context, the threat of imminent famine is serious and very real. 17 million people (60 percent of the population) are food insecure, and of these 10.2 million are in IPC phase 3 ‘crisis’ and 6.8 million are in IPC Phase 4 ‘emergency’ phases.¹ These numbers are growing, and the probability of a slide into famine conditions (IPC phase 5) in the most affected regions is expected to increase over the next six months if current factors driving food insecurity and humanitarian needs are not addressed.²

Like South Sudan, Somalia and north-east Nigeria, the factors worsening food insecurity and overall humanitarian needs in Yemen are man-made. The main cause is the continuing conflict, which has generated large-scale displacement, disrupted economic and social activity, and led to a breakdown in key systems and institutions necessary to sustain livelihoods, productivity and essential services. The extent of the damage caused by the conflict has been made worse by pre-existing weaknesses. As one

of the poorest countries in the Middle East, Yemen suffered from endemic and widespread poverty and vulnerability, a stagnating economy, dwindling natural resources, and weak governance and institutions. The current conflict has pushed Yemen’s already weak economic and social institutions and services to the brink of total collapse. In this context of increased fragility, Yemen is acutely vulnerable to shocks, which it does not have the capacity to handle. According to March 2017 IPC analyses, further disruptions in trade, an escalation of the conflict, or even a change in climatic patterns could tip the country into famine, with potentially disastrous consequences.

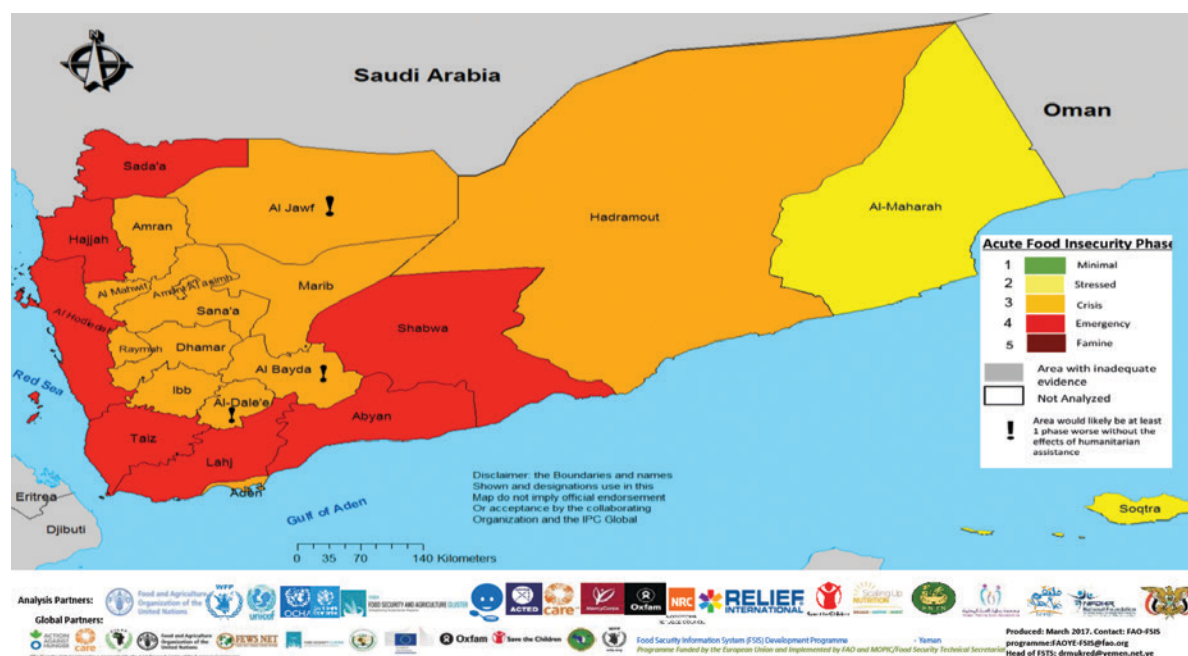
A key priority of the international community is to prevent food insecurity trends from reaching famine levels. The nature of the crisis has four principal implications for an effective response:

- **Humanitarian life-saving assistance continues to play a critical role**, and in several governorates been responsible for notable reductions in food insecurity. In the short-term, and given the severity of the situation/trends and scale of needs, this remains the most urgent, important and viable course of action.

1 Integrated Phase Classification. *Yemen Acute Food Insecurity Situation*. March 2017.

2 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Yemen Crisis Overview*. 2017. <http://www.unocha.org/yemen/about-ocha-yemen#>

YEMEN PROJECTED FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW (MARCH–JULY 2017)



Source: FEWS NET

- **At the same time, life-saving assistance alone is an insufficient measure over the medium-term,** given that it is limited to addressing the symptoms and not underlying (and worsening) causes of food insecurity and vulnerability. Additional resilience and recovery interventions are needed to complement life-saving assistance to: prevent further deepening of vulnerability and food insecurity by increasing resilience and mitigating core drivers of food insecurity over the medium term; safe-guard gains achieved through life-saving assistance through more durable forms of support; and prevent critical institutions and services from collapsing.
- **Over the medium-term, measures to strengthen resilience and stabilize conditions need to be accompanied by political actions** that create an appropriate enabling environment

to ensure their sustainability. These do not require a full-scale peace agreement, but can take the form of intermediate decisions and actions taken by parties that have a direct impact on food security, including restrictions on imports, disruptions of road movements, functioning of state institutions and economic governance violations. These measures could be important steps to a comprehensive political and peace settlement to the conflict, and broader political and social confidence and peacebuilding.

- **Finally, long-term prevention and mitigation of famine risk will need to rest in multi-faceted development solutions** to Yemen's underlying structural drivers, which include deep-rooted governance, economic, political and environmental deficits and challenges.

2. UNDERSTANDING FAMINE RISK IN YEMEN

While conflict is undoubtedly the most important factor explaining heightened famine risk in Yemen today, its underlying dynamics are complex and multi-faceted in nature.

Based on the ‘complex emergencies’ model of famine causation outlined earlier, three levels of variables can be identified: primary drivers (structural causes); secondary drivers (proximate causes) and tertiary drivers (direct causes)—all of which combine to determine the scale and severity of food insecurity, livelihoods loss and malnutrition and disease, and hence famine risk. These are illustrated in the following diagram, and described below:

PRIMARY DRIVERS (STRUCTURAL CAUSES)

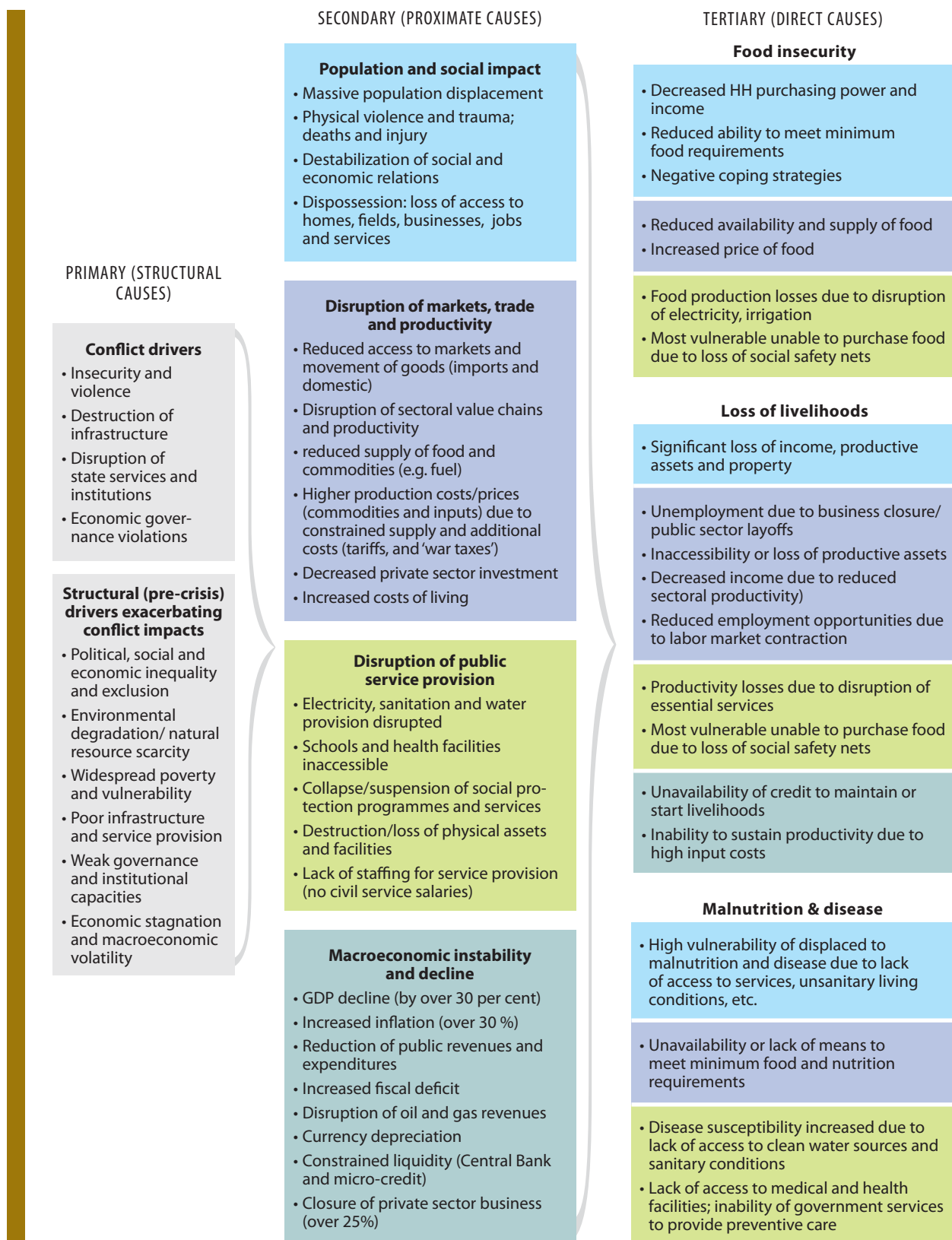
Two main factors explain the worsening humanitarian and food security situation in Yemen: the direct consequences and impacts of the ongoing conflict and pre-existing economic, social and institutional weakness and deficiencies:

The conflict in Yemen (2015 to present). The conflict in Yemen since 2015 has had a disastrous impact on the country’s economic situation, institutional capacities, infrastructure and the welfare of its population. Of these, the most important impacts include: the high and recurring incidence of violence and insecurity throughout the country; mass displacement, disrupted livelihoods and income sources; the widespread destruction of public and private infrastructure and property; the disruption and collapse of core state institutions and services; and economic governance violations perpetrated by the parties to the conflict.

Pre-existing conditions and challenges. Even before the crisis, Yemen faced significant political, economic,

social and governance challenges, rooted in historical and structural antecedents, that led to the unrest of 2011, and were deepened by the subsequent turmoil and volatility of the transition period (2011-2014). Together, these deepened the vulnerability and fragility of the country to external and internal shocks, and explain why the conflict has had such a devastating human, economic and institutional impact. In terms of famine causation, the most important factors include:

- Historical patterns of political, social and economic inequality and exclusion;
- Widespread poverty and vulnerability (deepened by the events of 2011-2014);
- Poor infrastructure and service provision (which deteriorated sharply after 2011);
- Weak governance and institutional capacities;
- Macro-economic stagnation and volatility (with key macroeconomic indicators in continuous decline since 2011);
- High rates of population growth, which over time place additional strain on resources and services;
- Low levels of food production and associated dependency on imports, compounded by rapid replacement of edible commodity production with cash crops such as *qat*;
- Environmental degradation and diminishing natural resources.





SECONDARY DRIVERS (PROXIMATE CAUSES)

The two structural drivers have had systemic (or system-wide) impacts in a number of areas, causing destruction, disruption and instability, which in turn have had a direct 'knock-on' effect on individual, household and community welfare:

Displacement, injury and loss of social cohesion.

The insecurity, violence and destruction of property and infrastructure caused by the conflict has had a significant impact on the immediate situation and prospects of a large part of the population, including notably over 3 million people who have been displaced (with over 2 million still displaced at present), and lost access to their homes, property and livelihoods. Millions have also been directly affected by physical violence, abuse and trauma, as well as the loss of social cohesion within communities (impacting their collective organizational and coping capacities, and ability to manage disputes). Physical displacement has created acute vulnerability for this population group, who are deprived of all livelihoods means and access to services. Returnees (approximately 1 million at present) fare

marginally better, while host communities in areas of displacement face the extra strain and cost of accommodating the displaced.

Disruption of markets, trade and productivity.

Ongoing insecurity and violence, the destruction of roads, ports, airports and other economic infrastructure, and the intentional blockage or high taxation of imports has caused significant disruptions to the functioning of markets and the movement of goods. This has resulted in reduced availability and supply of both imported and domestically produced goods (including notably food), higher prices for productive inputs and essential commodities such as fuel, and disrupted economic value chains. Damage to energy generation facilities (estimated at more than 50 percent in cities) and constrained availability of fuel has led to widespread shortages of electricity, impacting both productivity and provision of services. Market and transportation/trade disruptions have had a severe impact on trading activity and the productivity of firms, due to both constrained availability and higher prices of essential inputs, and challenges in accessing productive

assets (e.g. land) and getting goods to market. In the agricultural sector (which employed over 50 percent of the working population), crop production decreased by 38 percent between 2014-2016,³ with decreases in livestock production of 35 percent and fishing between 50-75 percent for the same period.

Disruption of public service provision. The conflict has dramatically impacted the provision of basic services due to the disruption of supplies and operational funds, damage to facilities and equipment (estimated at 30% percent of all assets), insecurity and suspension or reductions in the payment of salaries to public servants. In the health sector, almost half of health facilities are non-functional or partially functional, and over 30,000 health workers have not been paid, interrupting access to basic healthcare to over 10.4 million people (WHO). Provision of water, waste management and irrigation services have also been disrupted, affecting over 19 million people and agricultural productivity, and increasing vulnerability to climatic events (floods and droughts). Social protection services, which previously provided critical assistance to the poorest, were also temporarily suspended in 2015, deepening vulnerability. Agriculture extension, domestic and trans boundary livestock disease surveillances have been severely disrupted. Public service provision was already constrained prior to the crisis and continued conflict-related disruptions and loss could result in their total collapse, which would place a tremendous burden on international humanitarian assistance.

Macroeconomic instability and decline. Yemen's economy, already stagnating and weakened since 2011, experienced significant further deterioration due to the conflict. In 2015, GDP contracted by an estimated 28 percent and inflation increased to 30 percent. Insecurity and violence has disrupted government revenue generation (including through the suspension of oil and gas production and inability to collect taxes), leading to a significant reduction in public expenditures, which deprived state institutions

of operations funds and led to the reduction and suspension of civil servant salaries. Against a rising public deficit and low pre-crisis reserves, the Central Bank of Yemen has faced a liquidity crisis and has been unable to check the depreciation of the Yemeni Rial (YER). The worsening economic and business environment, together with conflict-induced market and trade disruptions, has forced 25 percent of private enterprises to suspend their operations, leading to significant unemployment. Poverty, which was already widespread and increasing prior to the current conflict, is estimated to have increased significantly, from 34.1 percent in 2014 to 62 percent in 2016.⁴

TERTIARY DRIVERS (DIRECT CAUSES)

The conflict and its secondary impacts on the economy and public service provision have combined to create a complex array of factors that are directly causing or contributing to food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, and increased incidences of malnutrition and disease—all of which are core determinants of famine risk:

Food insecurity. As of September 2017, 17 million people (equivalent to 60 percent of the total population) are considered food insecure and require urgent humanitarian assistance. Of these, 10.2 million are in IPC Phase 3 'Crisis' and 6.8 million people are in IPC Phase 4 'emergency'. Populations in IPC phases 3 and 4 have increased 20 percent since June 2016.⁵ Direct causes of food insecurity include a combination of reduced availability and supply of food (due to market and trade disruptions) and declining purchasing power due to increased prices of basic goods and reduction of incomes due to loss of employment or access to productive assets.⁶ The population is particularly vulnerable to disruptions in imports, given the country's historical import dependency on staple foods (estimated at 90-95 percent). Increasing food insecurity has led to the rise of negative coping strategies, including poor food consumption (limited and poor-quality rations), increased personal and household debt, and reduced

3 Total cereal production in 2016 was estimated at 480,000 MT, which is about 11 percent below the 2015 harvest and 37 percent below the previous five-year average (FAO GIEWS, 2017).

4 World Bank. *Country Engagement Note*. June 2016.

5 Integrated Phase Classification. *Yemen Acute Food Insecurity Situation*. March 2017

6 According to WFP, the cost of a minimum food basket is currently 33 percent higher than before the crisis. (WFP. *State of Food Insecurity in Yemen*. April 2017).

expenditures on health and education—all of which have deepened vulnerability. The most food insecure populations include IDPs (including recent returnees) who have experienced the sharpest declines in personal and household incomes, as well as the most poor, whose essential needs were previously supported through national social protection programmes. Ninety-five districts are currently considered at high risk of famine having breached the international standard thresholds of food insecurity using the IPC Phase Classification procedures, and WHO's classification thresholds (i.e. ≥ 20 percent severely food insecure and ≥ 15 percent Global Acute Malnutrition).⁷ Continued disruption of imports, domestic trade, and increasing prices, against the backdrop of continued insecurity and income/livelihoods losses, are expected to increase food insecurity, including potentially to IPC Phase 5 'famine' level in most affected governorates and districts.⁸

Loss of livelihoods. Livelihoods have been significantly impacted by all four secondary drivers outlined above—particularly by the decline in purchasing power of the population due to loss of livelihoods. An estimated 8 million people have lost their livelihoods, with economic losses amounting to an estimated US\$ 3.9 billion since the start of the conflict. These include loss of employment and/or income as a result of suspension or reduction in civil servant salaries (affecting 1.25 million people),⁹ decreased productivity/income and closure of firms due to market/trade disruptions, and increased cost of inputs and inaccessibility of productive assets (due to insecurity or destruction).¹⁰ Livelihood losses have been particularly pronounced in the agricultural sector, which accounts for 60 percent of household livelihoods, 50 percent of the workforce and 25-30 percent of the annual food requirement, and in which production has decreased by more than 30 percent. The fishery sector is severely damaged due

to access restriction to fishing sites and cross border trade. Fishermen in coastal areas stopped fishing and majority lost their livelihood opportunities. The poultry sector is on verge of disintegrating. Taking into consideration the high investment in this sector, its collapse will affect livelihoods of considerable population in the country. In the face of continued insecurity, market disruption, inadequate public financing, and unfavorable macro-economic conditions, livelihood options are expected to further decline as productivity losses and unemployment continue to increase, further increasing food insecurity and reliance on humanitarian assistance.

Malnutrition and disease. In Yemen, the deterioration of WASH and health services, together with increased individual and household vulnerability in the context of declining incomes and food availability, are directly contributing to significant increases in disease and malnutrition. These in turn serve to reinforce vulnerability and erode resilience and coping mechanisms. At present, an estimated 4.5 million children and pregnant and lactating women are acutely malnourished (up 148 percent since 2014), while 95 districts across 14 governorates report GAM scores above the global emergency threshold. Increasing malnutrition rates are directly caused by the breakdown of health services and social safety nets, and exacerbated by inadequate food availability, and the incidence of disease.¹¹ With respect to the latter, continued disruptions in the provision of adequate water and waste management services (with over 8 million people lacking access to safe drinking water and sanitation), combined with restricted access to health services (with only 45 percent of facilities fully functional), have directly led to the outbreak of a cholera epidemic with over 494,000 suspected cases and 2,000 deaths reported by late June 2017 (WHO data).

7 Yemen Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) and Nutrition Cluster

8 Integrated Phase Classification. *Yemen Acute Food Insecurity Situation*. March 2017

9 The main sources of household income in Yemen are: public and private sector salaries (40 percent), informal labor (30 percent), trade and agricultural production (20 percent) and other sources (10 percent). (WFP. *Yemen Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (EFSNA)*. 2016).

10 World Bank. 2016.

11 Integrated Phase Classification. *Yemen Acute Food Insecurity Situation*. March 2017

3. ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH FOR MITIGATING FAMINE RISK IN YEMEN

As outlined above, the dynamics explaining the heightened risk of famine in Yemen are complex and multi-faceted, and not reducible to one factor alone.

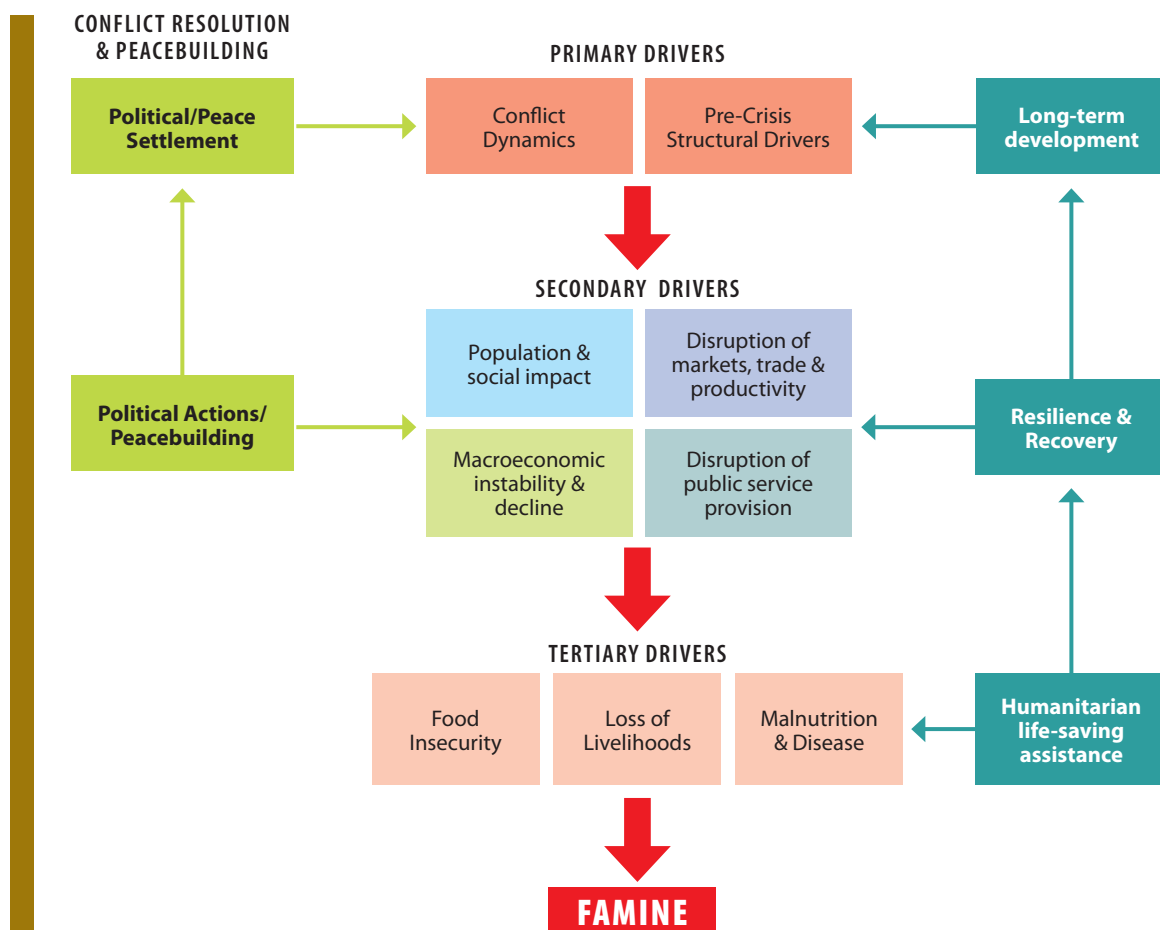
Understanding the cause and nature of food insecurity (as a prime determinant of famine risk) requires an understanding of how conflict dynamics are affecting the systems, institutions, and services essential to social and economic stability, and how changes in these directly impact the welfare and livelihoods of individuals and households. For an effective response to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of famine, it needs to take into account and address these causal relationships. This, by definition, points to the need for a holistic approach that is flexible enough to address the three sets of causal drivers outlined below.

In the case of Yemen, this necessitates addressing not just the immediate manifestation and impact of food insecurity, loss of livelihoods and malnutrition and disease, but also the proximate and underlying factors through both development-oriented and political/peacebuilding perspectives. Accordingly, four levels of response can be identified that address different aspects of famine causation. These are illustrated in diagram 2, and described in detail below.

1. Level 1 Response: Humanitarian life-saving assistance. The provision of life-saving assistance in famine or pre-famine contexts focuses on addressing the incidence or high risk of mortality and disease as a direct consequence of food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, malnutrition and disease. In these contexts, the aim

is to provide immediate and direct assistance to individuals, prioritizing access and speed of delivery. Designed to save lives in emergency contexts, these interventions only address the direct manifestation of famine-related threats, and not their causes. As such, they should be considered a temporary measure. In the context of the famine risk dynamics in Yemen, these interventions include:

- **Alleviating food insecurity** through direct supply of food (both in kind and through vouchers) to meet minimal food and nutrition requirements; cash transfers to increase the purchasing power of households and mitigate use of negative coping strategies; emergency livelihoods assistance through the provision of critical agricultural, livestock and fisheries inputs or assets;
- **Reducing the incidence and vulnerability to diseases**, through access to health services by the direct provision of medical services and medicines (e.g. mobile health clinics); clean water and sanitation, including emergency distribution of water (e.g. trucking) and provision of temporary sanitation facilities (e.g. latrines);
- **Reducing the incidence of malnutrition** through nutrition services, with particular focus on children and pregnant and lactating women.



2. Level 2 Response: Resilience and recovery.

Increasingly, famine prevention and response strategies also include interventions aimed at enhancing the resilience of individuals, households, communities and institutions, understood as coping strategies and capacities that allow them to weather adverse economic and social situations and prevent humanitarian needs from deepening. These strategies can be integrated in both humanitarian and economic recovery and development assistance frameworks, where they serve to bridge immediate life-saving assistance with longer-term economic and social recovery. In the context of Yemen, these interventions can help mitigate the systemic disruptions caused by conflict (secondary driver or proximate causes) by stabilizing and preventing the collapse of institutions and service delivery, and creating a space for economic activity. Interventions can include:

- **Supporting agricultural and non-agricultural income generation to rebuild lost or damaged community assets, and increase purchasing power and economic self-reliance** through emergency or temporary employment programmes (e.g. cash for work, cash for assets, food for assets); strengthening productive capacities (through access to financing, productive inputs and training); and active labor market measures to facilitate skills development and employment creation over the medium-term;
- **Stimulating sectoral productivity and market activity to enhance sustainable livelihoods and availability and supply of commodities** through rehabilitation and reconstruction of essential economic infrastructure (roads, airports, markets); support for sectoral value chain development (e.g.

agricultural, livestock and fisheries); improving access to credit and other financial services; providing technical support to SMEs; and reducing barriers to importing food by facilitating access to trade financing. Promoting the recovery and growth of agricultural production could have multiple benefits of both increasing food availability, decreasing reliance on imports, and generating employment and income.

- **Strengthening equitable and sustainable delivery of basic services** by strengthening institutional capacities at central and local state levels, as well as within communities and civil society; rehabilitation of service infrastructure and provision of equipment; support for recruitment, payment and training of personnel; and the provision of financing for capital and operational expenditures.
- **Short-term alleviation of the fiscal burden caused by the crisis** through provision of external financing to replenish national reserves, thereby facilitating stabilization of the exchange rate, facilitating lending, and resumption of regular payment of civil servant salaries.¹²

3. **Level 3 Response: Political and peacebuilding measures.** Over the medium to long-term, efforts to enhance food security, livelihoods and access to services by 'shoring up' institutions, systems and productive capacities will not be sustainable or face diminishing returns unless they can also be linked to a definitive resolution of the conflict or specific political agreements that create an appropriate enabling environment (hence addressing conflict as a primary driver). Addressing some of the impacts of the conflict on the population, economic productivity, public services and macroeconomic stability do not necessarily require or need to wait for a comprehensive peace agreement, but could take the form of interim or 'stop-gap' political decisions by all parties. These could, in their own right, serve as important confidence building

measures on the road to a comprehensive political and peace settlement to the conflict.¹³ These could include agreements and decisions to:

- Safeguard and avoid the closure of access to key infrastructure (e.g. roads, ports, airports, and power generation facilities);
- End use of economic measures as instruments of war (e.g. economic blockades or war taxation);
- Preserve the independent functioning of key government institutions and programmes such as the Central Bank, Social Welfare Fund, the Public Works Programme and the Social Fund for Development;
- Allow for the safe return of IDPs.

4. **Level 4 Response: Long-term development.** While political decisions and an eventual settlement to the conflict will end the destructive pressures on the systems, institutions and services serving as secondary drivers of famine risk, they will likely remain extremely weak and incapable of improving economic conditions and livelihood prospects over the long-run in the absence of long-term development measures. Ultimately, these will be critical to ensure sustainable recovery of productive assets and economic growth, reduce poverty and vulnerability, and also prevent the reoccurrence of conflict. Key priorities in this regard for Yemen will likely include:

- Addressing sources of grievance due to social and economic inequalities and exclusion through the development of inclusive institutions at central and local levels, and the development of equitable social and economic policies;
- Development of targeted programmes to provide social protection, support long-term agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood opportunities, and economic development in areas inhabited by the most poor and vulnerable;

12 Famine Early Warning Systems Network. *Yemen Food Security Outlook, June 2017 to January 2018*.

13 For further recommendations, see: International Crisis Group. *Instruments of Pain (I): Conflict and Famine in Yemen*. April 2017.



- Development of a master capital plan to rehabilitate, modernize and expand Yemen's economic infrastructure;
- Development of a long-term national economic plan focused on economic diversification, private sector development, jobs creation and equitable economic growth;
- Sectoral strategies and plans for improving sectoral productivity, supply and demand for labor, and value chain development;
- A national plan for the strengthening of governance and service provision institutions at central, governorate and district level;
- Strengthening of government fiscal and financial management capacities, including revenue collection, expenditure planning and oversight;
- Improving the government's economic position through financing of the fiscal deficit and access to international financial markets.

4. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT FAMINE RESPONSE EFFORTS IN YEMEN

Since the start of the conflict in 2015, the international community has allocated considerable resources to address political, humanitarian and economic priorities and needs in Yemen. The elements of the international response which directly address the risk of famine are currently integrated in the HRP as well as development-orientated interventions regrouped under a 'humanitarian plus' heading.

This section provides an overview of measures with direct bearing on the prevention of famine, and how they relate to the comprehensive approach to addressing the full range of causal variable presented above.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN (HRP)

The current HRP for Yemen (2017) foresees a range of measures to address the deepening risk of famine, and which for the most part target those governorates and districts with the highest risk populations (IPC levels 3 and 4). These measures are articulated across four sectors—food security and agriculture, WASH, health and nutrition—and focus on the provision of immediate life-saving assistance (corresponding to the Level 1 response outlined in the previous section) and enhancing livelihoods, resilience and service delivery (corresponding to the level 2 response outlined above). Table 1 below provides a summary of these sectors, corresponding interventions and the population targets (planned and reached) for 2017.

To date, the humanitarian response as articulated through the HRP (and its previous iterations in 2016 and 2015) is widely considered as having been

effective in preventing a more rapid escalation of food insecurity as well as morbidity associated with malnutrition and disease. In at least six governorates (Al Hudaydah, Amran, Hajjah, Sa'dah, Sana'a, and Ta'izz), food security outcomes would have been at least one phase higher in the absence of current food assistance.¹⁴ At the same time, humanitarian partners acknowledge that the drivers of food insecurity remain present, meaning that underlying vulnerabilities have not been addressed. This underscores the observation made earlier that while life-saving assistance can provide a temporary relief, it must be linked to measures to address underlying drivers—notably the secondary drivers described in section 2—if such support is to be sustainable and effectively address current vulnerabilities.

In addition, humanitarian partners are concerned that insufficient financing for humanitarian efforts will erode the gains achieved to date in mitigating food insecurity, potentially pushing several governorates into IPC Phases 4 and 5 (full famine). During the first half of 2017, only 19 percent of the total funding required to address famine prevention related needs across the four relevant sectors has been mobilized.¹⁵ Of the limited financing made available,

14 Integrated Phase Classification. March 2017.

15 The total funding required for the four sectors amounts to US\$ 1.9 billion, of which 19 percent has been mobilized. The total funding requirement for the 2017 HRP (revised in August 2017 to include additional needs related to the Cholera outbreak) amount to US\$ 2.3 billion.

most financing has been allocated to life-saving interventions, which have been accorded priority over resilience (level 2) related interventions.¹⁶ Moreover, it is important to note that HRP 2017 targets do not represent the totality of the population in need. For

instance, emergency food assistance targets for 2017 have been set for people in acute need, amounting to less than half of the total population in need (8 million people out of a total of 17 million people currently in IPC Phase 3 and 4 food insecurity).

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS TARGETING FAMINE RISKS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	SECTOR	SELECTED INTERVENTIONS	POPN TARGETS (2017) ¹⁷	% REACHED (JULY 2017)
1. Provide life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people in Yemen through an effective, targeted response	Food security and agriculture	Provision of emergency food assistance	8 million	58% ¹⁸
	WASH	Direct delivery of emergency water supply	800,000	46
	Health	Provision of medical consultations	6 million	8
	Nutrition	Nutrition services for children and pregnant and lactating women	2.5 million	9
2. Support and pre-serve services and institutions essential to immediate humanitarian action and the promotion of livelihoods and resilience	Food security and agriculture	Emergency livelihoods assistance (agricultural, livestock and fisheries)	3.3 million	15
	Health	Rehabilitation of damaged health facilities	226 (facilities)	50
	WASH	Support for operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of public water systems	2.9 million	42

BRIDGING HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS TO PREVENT FAMINE

In addition to the HRP, the United Nations and the World Bank have developed a number of interventions which are intended to complement provision of humanitarian assistance through support for strengthening livelihoods and community resilience, preserving institutional capacity service delivery and promoting economic recovery. Grouped under the rubric of ‘humanitarian plus’, these interventions highlight increasing recognition and consensus among international partners of the need for a collective and sustained approach combining humanitarian, peacebuilding and development assistance to address the protracted crisis in Yemen.¹⁹ Specific priorities

around which this consensus is crystallizing include: the need to safeguard gains achieved through the humanitarian response through strengthened resilience and recovery; the need to preserve existing institutional capacities and services; prepare the groundwork for an eventual political and peace settlement to enable rapid implementation; and initiate dialogue and analysis of medium to long-term economic recovery and development needs and priorities, including measures to address structural drivers of food insecurity.²⁰

As a basis for developing such an integrated approach within the overall framework of the ‘New Way of Working’, the Humanitarian Country Team has identified five priority interventions to guide the efforts of international partners:

16 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. April 2017.

17 Data as of April 2017. (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Yemen Periodic Monitoring Review. January-April 2017).

18 Average monthly reach as of July 2017, FSAC response and gap analysis.

19 The 2017 HRP explicitly acknowledges the interface between life-saving and development-focused measures as part of the humanitarian response. (United Nations. 2017 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan. January 2017).

20 United Nations. Snapshot: Yemen’s ‘New Way of Working’. 2017. See also Final Report: Consultative Meeting for Yemen, Larnaca 6-8 October 2015.

- An integrated approach to famine prevention combining life-saving assistance with livelihoods and economic productivity support;
- Targeted support to essential public institutions to ensure continuity of service delivery and prevent institutional collapse;
- Cash transfers to promote resilience and decrease aid dependence, addressing a gap in delivery of public social protection;
- Enhance safety, security and rule of law in tandem with conflict resolution and peacebuilding; and
- Promote effective coordination and joint planning across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities.²¹
- Critical state institutions, at central and local levels, maintain core functions and contribute to confidence building between the parties to the conflict.
- Basic social services continue to be delivered to the general population.
- Communities are better managing external threats, local risks and shocks with increased economic self-reliance and enhanced social cohesion.
- Effective leadership, participation and engagement of women, youth and civil society are promoted to strengthen their contribution to peace and security in Yemen.²⁴

In order to facilitate partnerships and collaboration in this context, several collective instruments are being developed. These include a “Yemen Humanitarian-Development-Peace Platform” (an initiative of the UN, World Bank, IsDB and EU), which provides a mechanism for centralizing data collection and analysis to inform common understandings of needs, priorities and collaborative opportunities, as well as multi-stakeholder needs assessment and priority setting exercises, building on the Damage Needs Assessment (DNA) undertaken in 2015 – the most important of which is the “pre-Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment” process.²²

UN STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (UNSF) FOR YEMEN (2017-2019)

The Yemen UNSF provides a common UN system vision and strategy with the objective of “mitigating the impact of the current conflict on the social and economic conditions in Yemen, and on the capacity of state institutions while contributing to ongoing peacebuilding efforts”.²³ It is intended to serve as a programmatic bridge between the HRP and future recovery and post-crisis programming, within which UN system efforts will be focused on four collective outcomes:

Within this framework, a number of projects are currently being implemented or in development, which directly address famine-related causal factors as identified in the sections above through integrated and multi-partners approaches. These include:

- **Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen Project (ERRY).** Implemented by UNDP, FAO, ILO, and WFP and financed by the EU, the objectives of this joint programme are to strengthen economic self-reliance and enhance social cohesion to better manage risks and shocks as well as to strengthen the responsiveness, effectiveness and accountability of institutions in delivering services and meeting community needs. The programme, which is financed at US\$ 38 million, is intended to enhance planning capacities in 100 communities, create livelihoods for over 55,000 individuals, strengthen capacities in four governorate offices and 8 local district authorities, and support private sector development through training for 1,500 people and support 2 business associations.
- **World Bank-financed projects.** In addition, the World Bank, in partnership with the UN, is currently financing a number of projects for over US\$ 1 billion, which address a number of secondary drivers of famine risk in Yemen, notably:

21 Yemen Humanitarian Country Team. *Reply to IASC Steering Committee – Draft*. received September 2017.

22 Ibid.

23 United Nations. *UN Strategic Framework for Yemen (2017-2019) – Draft*. August 2017.

24 Ibid.

- Creation of livelihood and income generation opportunities through rapid employment projects as well as through improvement in productive assets and provision of related services;
- Expanding community access to basic services through rehabilitation of community-based institutions and provision of cash transfers;
- Decreasing susceptibility to disease and malnutrition through provision of health and nutrition services to highly vulnerable populations (with particular focus on children and women), while strengthening service provision capacities of health institutions.

TABLE 2: OVERVIEW OF WORLD-BANK FINANCED PROJECTS

PROJECT TITLE	PARTNERS/ COMPONENTS	OBJECTIVE	TARGETS/ BENEFICIARIES	BUDGET (US\$ MILLION)
Smallholder Agricultural Production Restoration and Enhancement Project (2017-2020)	FAO	To increase the use of productivity and nutrition-enhancing agricultural practices by smallholders. The first component will finance priority subprojects and investments to increase smallholders' production, income, and nutrition. It consists of following sub-components: (i) strengthening community land and water management; (ii) improving animal husbandry, livestock production, and animal health services; and (iii) improving livelihoods and adding value to agriculture. The second component, capacity building and extension will finance: (i) capacity building activities to strengthen skills of stakeholders involved in service provision in the project areas; and (ii) extension activities for project beneficiaries in a range of fields.	90,000 households (630,000 people) benefiting from investments, subprojects & services; 200,000 livestock owners benefiting from animal vaccinations & treatments	36
Emergency Crisis Response Project (2017-2019)	UNDP (umbrella and additional financing)	to provide short-term employment and access to selected basic services to the most vulnerable; and preserve implementation capacity of two service delivery programs. There are two components to the project, the first component being labor-intensive works and community services. The overall objectives of the component are to: (a) provide income support to targeted communities through temporary employment opportunities, (b) increase the productive assets and means of livelihood of beneficiary households and communities and improve access to community and social services, and (c) preserve the implementation capacity of the SFD and PWP, as key national service delivery programs.	400,000 people employed; 1.7 million household members indirectly benefiting from income; 2.5 million people benefiting from services and improved productivity	300
	UNICEF (Second additional financing and restructuring)	The project objective is to provide short-term employment and access to selected basic services to the most vulnerable; preserve existing implementation capacity of two service delivery programs; and provide emergency cash transfers to the poor and vulnerable in response to the food crisis.	1.5 million vulnerable and poor households benefit from cash transfers (approximately 8 million people)	200
Emergency Health and Nutrition Project (2017-2020)	UNICEF and WHO (umbrella and additional financing)	The project objective is to contribute to the provision of basic health and essential nutrition services for the benefit of the population of the Republic of Yemen. The project is designed to scale up support for the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition among children and women at all levels of care and to provide fortified nutritious supplements/food to the identified malnourished people.	13 million people	483

5. COSTS AND BENEFITS OF RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY INTERVENTIONS

The preceding sections have explained the value of interventions that go beyond addressing immediate needs related to food insecurity by directly addressing the factors causing reduced supply and availability of food, and decreasing purchasing power, among others.

In a context where international financial assistance is limited and difficult decisions need to be taken on how to prioritize resources, it is important to carefully weigh the appropriateness and effectiveness of different types of interventions. This section compares the costs and benefits of direct life-saving assistance (Level 1 responses) with measures to improve livelihoods and resilience (level 2 responses). As such, the aim is not to argue that one type of response is better and should substitute for the other, but rather to inform decisions on the appropriate 'mix' of interventions required in particular contexts to most effectively address famine prevention objectives given available resources, and achieve an appropriate balance between life-saving and longer-term resilience and recovery measures over the medium to longer term.

For the purposes of the analysis, and to illustrate the types of considerations that should be weighed, three interventions have been compared, drawing from ongoing assistance programmes:

1. **Level 1:** The programme of emergency food assistance implemented under the food security and agriculture cluster of the HRP.²⁵ This programme is intended to provide emergency food assistance (direct relief food and cash/ voucher transfers) to meet minimum food
2. **Level 2:** The Yemen Emergency Response Project, financed by the World Bank and implemented by UNDP, aims to support the rehabilitation of community infrastructures and services (including water management systems, rehabilitation of agricultural land and rehabilitation of roads) through labor-intensive approaches (cash for work). The programme is expected to create temporary employment for 400,000 people, indirectly benefiting 2.8 million household members and another 2.5 million community members benefiting from productivity gains accruing from access to services and improved productive assets. Total costs for a three-year implementation period amount to approximately US\$ 265 million.
3. **Level 3:** The Yemen Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Restoration and Enhancement Project, financed by the World Bank and implemented by FAO, which aims to strengthen community land and water management, improve livestock production and improve

requirements for 8 million people per month within IPC Phase 3 and 4 food insecurity. Total costs amount to approximately US\$ 1 billion for one year (2017).

25 United Nations. *Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen 2017*. 2016.

livelihoods and agricultural value added. The programme is expected to benefit 90,000 households (630,000 people) in terms of direct employment income and productivity gains, as well as 200,000 livestock owners benefiting from better livestock productivity. Total costs for a three-year implementation period amount to approximately US\$ 36 million.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the comparative analysis of the three interventions (the summary of which is included in the annex), a strong and clear argument can be made—all things considered equal—about the cost effectiveness of level 2 interventions in preventing food insecurity and associated impacts (e.g. malnutrition and negative coping strategies). Extrapolating project costs to three years for a total population of 8 million (1.14 million households), yields the following: the cost of providing emergency food assistance amounts to US\$ 3 billion; the cost of the emergency response project (cash for work and community infrastructure) amounts to US\$ 757 million; and the cost of the smallholder agricultural productivity and restoration project (improving productive assets and access to services) amounts to US\$ 457 million. In other words, measures to enhance livelihoods through income generation and productivity support cost less over time to achieve the same results as emergency food assistance.

At the same time, both level 2 interventions have important potential costs related to viability and sustainability risk, which accrue due to the volatility or lack of enabling conditions for development-oriented activities (the security, political and broader institutional and economic environment). The cost effectiveness of both level 2 interventions must also therefore take into consideration the risk and probability of project failure and the added costs of implementing enabling measures (which as discussed in the previous section are related to addressing primary drivers of food insecurity at the political level). Because of its modality of direct delivery, provision of emergency food assistance does not face the same level of risk (though access for distribution is often an issue).

Additional benefits of Level 2 interventions.

In addition to mitigating food insecurity and malnutrition, reinforcing positive coping mechanisms, and increasing household purchasing power (the key benefits of the emergency food assistance programme), level 2 interventions are expected to have the following additional benefits:

- **Productivity gains and economic multipliers** resulting from improved access to productive assets, increased production due to better agricultural practices, and enhanced access to markets and services. These are expected to generate important returns on investment of between 100-150 percent due to, for instance, adoption of terracing techniques, spate irrigation, and improved animal husbandry techniques.²⁶

TABLE 3: ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF SELECTED AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENTS IN YEMEN

AGRICULTURAL ASSET	IMPROVEMENT SUPPORT THROUGH PROJECT	ESTIMATED INCREMENTAL NET BENEFIT (IN US\$ PER YEAR)
Land and soil management	Adoption or rehabilitation of land terracing techniques, which can increase land use, improve irrigation and mitigate soil erosion.	471 per hectare
Water management	Provision of cisterns for water harvesting, leading to reduced cost of drinking water, and increased farming and livestock productivity	2,115 per family
Irrigation	Expansion of spate irrigation for improved sorghum yields (20% increase)	3,119 per hectare
Livestock	Restocking of small ruminants with local improved breeds and improved husbandry techniques	975 per family

Source: Adapted from World Bank, *Yemen Smallholder Agricultural Production, Restoration and Enhancement Project (P162659)*, 2016.

26 World Bank. *Yemen – Smallholder Agricultural Production Restoration and Enhancement Project P162659*. 2017.

Both L2 interventions also contain important economic multipliers, insofar as the use of labor-intensive (cash for work) modalities to implement community and service provision projects means that the same investment has a double benefit – creating income for individuals and enhancing the productivity of those people who benefit from improved access to services. Table 3 below provides an overview of selected economic benefits of support for agricultural development in Yemen.

- **Avoided losses related to the further deterioration and collapse of critical services,** through preserving and maintaining critical service provisions (both institutional and community-based), which include losses in individual and community resilience, foregone productivity and the cost of substituting services through humanitarian assistance.
- **Avoided losses of productive assets,** including through the closure of businesses and negative coping strategies (e.g. distress sales), through the preservation of livelihoods and productive capacities.
- **Long-term productivity and development gains due to avoided health and education-related losses.** The reduction in food insecurity over time would be expected to decrease the exposure and incidence of malnutrition and disease and their long-term impacts, including stunting and morbidity, and also facilitate acquisition of productive skills through access to education. This would generate productive capacity that would otherwise have been lost due to prolonged food insecurity, and would also avoid costs related to provision of direct emergency assistance.
- **Avoided costs of humanitarian assistance.** Over time and where conditions permit, a transition from Level 1 to Level 2 interventions would also result in considerable savings in international financial assistance, given the significantly lower costs entailed.

Complementary and not competing. A very important caveat to the above analysis is that Level 1 and Level 2 interventions in the specific context of the current crisis in Yemen are not directly comparable from a strict cost/benefit perspective. It must be recognized that each operates under different operational and enabling conditions, and respond to somewhat different prerogatives:

- Level 1 interventions, of which emergency food assistance is but one example, respond to the prerogative of saving lives and reducing the immediate risk of morbidity. They provide immediate emergency services and assistance through direct implementation modalities, with operational risks being primarily issues of security and access.
- Level 2 interventions, on the other hand, are focused on the preservation and enhancement of livelihoods and productivity, and operate within a medium-term operational time-frame, given the time needed to derive income from productive activities and employment. Further, these interventions require an enabling environment in which economic productivity is viable, i.e. in which goods can be traded on adequate terms, markets are accessible, and production costs can be controlled.

The major implication of these distinctions is that Level 2 interventions cannot substitute for Level 1 interventions in the context of an acute conflict and humanitarian emergency. Rather, as mentioned at the outset, the two sets are complementary interventions that should be sequenced depending on prevailing conditions. This can include a temporary sequencing—involving the transition from life-saving to resilience-focused programming when the situation has stabilized sufficiently. It can also include a geographically-differentiated two-track strategy, with life-saving interventions focused in areas most badly affected and in which high levels of instability still prevail, and resilience focused interventions focused in those areas outside of the main conflict zones, where humanitarian needs are less acute but deep vulnerabilities nonetheless exist.

6. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS ON BETTER INTEGRATING HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE INTERVENTIONS TO PREVENT, MITIGATE AND ADDRESS FAMINE RISK

Based on the analysis of famine drivers in Yemen and ongoing efforts to promote greater integration across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts, the following observations and recommendations can be made:

- Both the HRP and humanitarian plus interventions currently address a subset of the total affected population due to limited financial resources. These interventions need to be scaled up significantly if they are to have a large-scale impact on the total affected population and avert the slide into famine conditions.
- While clear progress has been made in complementing humanitarian life-saving assistance with a number of large-scale development interventions, there is a need to go beyond statement of collective outcomes and ‘collaborative intent’ by humanitarian, development and peacebuilding partners to the development of an operational framework for joint prioritization, targeting and sequencing of interventions across the various domains. This is essential to ensure contiguity and transition between humanitarian and development efforts across time and space.
- The sustainability and overall effectiveness of development interventions are a serious concern in the current context in Yemen, which is marked by continued high levels of instability, conflict and violence. The absence of traditional ‘enablers’ for development interventions requires innovation, proactivity and robust risk management approaches to: a) identify where development efforts can be sustainable in the current context (including by focusing on areas of relative stability or institutions within society or at local levels which have capacity that can be built on); and b) develop more flexible modalities for development interventions, including phasing and sequencing of activities, to allow for greater adaptation to prevailing risks and responsiveness as conditions evolve.
- More robust linkages need to be established with international, regional and national actors engaged in political and peace efforts and negotiations to include a specific focus on improving security and access for the provision of humanitarian assistance and to facilitate economic stabilization and recovery. Pending a comprehensive political settlement to the conflict, collaboration between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors could focus, for instance, on mediating localized agreement on lifting of economic blockades and access restrictions; expanding ‘safe zones’ to enable humanitarian access and economic recovery; and supporting local conflict resolution and dialogue initiatives.

ANNEX: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FAMINE PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS IN YEMEN

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	PRIORITY ADDRESSED	ACTIVITIES	BENEFICIARIES	BENEFITS/IMPACT	ESTIMATED COSTS (PER ANNUM)	COSTS OF ASSISTANCE PROJECTED FOR THREE YEARS
Life-saving assistance	Emergency food assistance/alleviating food insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct food assistance • Cash/ voucher transfers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,000,000 direct beneficiaries who receive US\$65 equivalent per month in food assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleviation of short-term food insecurity • Improved coping ability • Avoided malnutrition and morbidity 	<p>Direct costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 billion USD (direct cost of food assistance) – US\$ 780 per beneficiary for 1 year <p>Indirect costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foregone productivity (abandonment of food production & income generation) • Risk of aid dependence 	3 billion USD
Livelihoods and resilience strengthening	<p>Income generation and access to services</p> <p>Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project (World Bank/ UNDP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term job creation (cash for work) • Rehabilitation of community infrastructure and services 	<p>Income creation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct beneficiaries (cash for work): 400,000 people, receiving up to \$500/ household or \$100/person • Indirect beneficiaries of wage income (family members): 1.7 million people <p>Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People benefiting from services supported through cash for work: 2.5 million <p>Services created</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water schemes constructed/ rehabilitated (165,000 m3) • Agricultural land and terraces rehabilitated (630 hectares) • Roads rehabilitated (65km) 	<p>Direct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved purchasing power of households • Income support to purchase basic necessities beyond food; • Alleviation of short-term food insecurity • Improved coping ability (productive assets and means of livelihood protected/ enhanced) • Preventive value (avoided humanitarian and human costs) <p>Returns/economic multipliers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated 100% return on investment • Increased economic productivity and self-reliance (agriculture) due to improved access to services • Institutional capacities for service provision preserved/strengthened (SFD/PWP) – avoided costs of collapse (human and humanitarian substitution costs) 	<p>• Project costs: 265 million USD (over three years)</p> <p>Indirect costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling conditions/ environment (security, governance, infrastructure) • Risk of loss due to conflict/insecurity 	If this assistance was scaled up to support 8 million people (1.14 million households benefiting from income and increased productivity), the total cost would be approximately: US\$757 million

(continued)

(continued)

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	PRIORITY ADDRESSED	ACTIVITIES	BENEFICIARIES	BENEFITS/IMPACT	ESTIMATED COSTS (PER ANNUM)	COSTS OF ASSISTANCE PROJECTED FOR THREE YEARS
Livelihoods and resilience strengthening	Strengthening food security, productivity and livelihoods Yemen Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Restoration and Enhancement Project (World Bank/FAO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening community land and water management • Improving livestock production and access to services • Improving livelihoods and agricultural value added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90,000 households (630,000 people) benefiting from income from employment and productivity gains • 200,000 livestock owners benefiting from better livestock productivity 	<p>Direct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of further deterioration in households' food security • Avoided productivity losses due to reduction of malnutrition and stunting; • Improved purchasing power <p>Returns/economic multipliers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall economic returns of US\$1.5 for every dollar invested (150% return on investment) • Promotion of increased food production and income generation, • maintained and increased agricultural and livestock productivity • Enhanced access to drinking water and agricultural productivity • Increased agricultural productivity through restoring abandoned land to productive use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project costs: 36 million USD (over three years) <p>Indirect costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling conditions/environment (security, governance, infrastructure) • Risk of loss due to conflict/insecurity 	If this assistance was scaled up to support 8 million people (1.14 million households benefiting from income and increased productivity), the total cost would be approximately: US\$ 457 million



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