

UNSC resolution 2417 and local food systems in the humanitarian-development nexus

Workshop report

12 September 2018, Bazaar of Ideas, The Hague

Organized by:

The Food & Business Knowledge Platform

www.knowledge4food.net

and

The Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law

www.kpsrl.org



On 12 September the Knowledge Platforms Food & Business and Security & Rule of Law jointly organized a workshop focusing on United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417 – on hunger and conflict. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs intends to follow up on the resolution it co-sponsored through programming on the nexus of humanitarian & development aid. The meeting provided an opportunity for exchange and learning to harvest experiences from practice and hear what support practitioners need from each other and policymakers and donors.

A group representatives from development and humanitarian organizations, policy and research discussed implications of the resolution, current best practices and ways forward for practice. Participants worked together to formulate concrete recommendations for practice and policy. For a detailed list of the recommendations, please see the end of this document.

Key trends of the recommendations for practice can be summed up as:

- 1) working from the bottom-up by connecting with, and building on, local communities, governance and stakeholders and their knowledge;
- 2) putting a greater focus on cross-sector or cross-cutting thinking;
- 3) supporting flexible ways of working so that programming can adapt to changing circumstances.

While the recommendations for the Netherlands as a donor and as a government can be summed up as:

- 1) as a donor, ensure better local monitoring and learning practices to facilitate flexible and adaptive programming;
- 2) as a donor, strengthen links between different types of programmes (development, humanitarian, advocacy) and promote joint working;
- 3) as a government, function as an ambassador for the resolution on the international stage by building coalitions, using it to engage other governments, and promoting accountability for violations of international (humanitarian) law.

Programme

15.00	Welcome and introduction by Gerrit-Jan van Uffelen, VHL Wageningen
15.05	Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNSC Resolution 2417 from the perspective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hashi Abdullahi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs• Key outcomes of scoping paper on humanitarian-development programming, Frank van Kesteren, The Broker• Reflection on the previous presentations, Gerrit-Jan van Uffelen, VHL Wageningen
16.00	Group work: Formulating recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Round 1: recommendations for practice• Round 2: recommendations for The Netherlands as a donor and as a government
16.55	Closing

Presentations

Hashi Abdullahi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- UNSCR2417 is unique because it is the first time a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution focuses on food and nutrition security (FNS). In this resolution disruption of food systems is for the first time considered as a violation of humanitarian law.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) intends to implement the resolution via interventions by promoting the shift from food aid to food assistance. Actionable advice is needed on how to facilitate or create an environment in unstable contexts, where food systems are still functioning against all odds, that allow for opportunities to provide perspective to people, which contributes to more stability.
- Programmes will be developed in the Horn of Africa, later in the Sahel.

Frank van Kesteren, The Broker

- Presents paper focusing on ways forward for interventions in the humanitarian-development nexus to strengthen local food systems. The paper is based on desk research, complemented by interviews with representatives of organizations working on these issues at NGO headquarters and field offices.
- Key messages were to:
 - 1) Support programmes that build on existing agricultural practices in protracted conflict areas, building on what is already there improves effectiveness;
 - 2) Support integration with programmes reducing constraints to agricultural production, by focusing on: reducing financial instability and vulnerability at household and community level, improving flexibility to adapt to climate variability, promoting land tenure registration to induce long-term sustainable investments, and promoting social protection to reduce cash/credit constraints;
 - 3) Improve coordination and cooperation between key stakeholders in protracted conflict areas by: developing and implementing programmes in cooperation with local communities, providing flexible funding to link humanitarian aid and (food systems) development, capitalizing on existing partnerships and improving them, and investing in quality monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Gerrit-Jan van Uffelen, VHL Wageningen

- Reflects on the previous presentations on the basis of his recent field experience organizing a 'learning journey' to South Sudan where he met with representatives of various organizations working in the humanitarian-development nexus to improve food security.
- South Sudan is a country where food insecurity in particular is induced by conflict and displacement. Livelihoods are further eroded by climate shocks, such as prolonged dry spells, flooding and pests. Yet it is a large, sparsely populated country with good conditions for agriculture. Due to the protracted nature of the conflict and crisis it has areas of relative stability as well as areas of conflict.
- One of his main observations was that many international organizations have little connection to what is actually happening in communities. He asked whether we really

understand the current food systems in place, and especially how people and their livelihoods have adapted and continue to adapt to conflict dynamics. Moreover, do we really understand the effects of previous programming and its impacts on the context? A further pressing question for South Sudan is what the sale of land to foreign investors to finance the war means for local communities.

- He generally agrees with the observations in the paper, noting that supporting food systems through food assistance interventions requires some aspects of the local economy to still function. This depends on the context, if areas of relative stability exist. If the economy collapsed and no seeds are available for example, reducing financial instability is not always the most effective intervention. Likewise, linking with social protection is promising, yet difficult without functioning authorities. Finally, he observed that cooperation is indeed a big problem that needs to be tackled by donors. In South Sudan response to the crisis are often focused on short term relief, fragmented and based in different methodologies. How to organize a more systemic response thus remains a prominent question.

Discussion: Q&A on presentations, discussion on implications of the resolution

- Participants discussed the potential that is often present in such areas and what bottlenecks keep them from achieving progress. In the case of access to markets, often basic infrastructure is lacking. In the Farm to Market Alliance, a public-private partnership intervention in a more stable context this was already very difficult, yet in stable countries the coming together of NGOs and businesses can be very effective. An important focus should be the empowerment of local communities, villages, individuals.
- What 'baby steps' forward could be made in the case of South Sudan was a question then. If despite its potential most basic foodstuffs in the country are imported from Kenya and Sudan. For the international community one step could already be better coordination. FAO for instance is able to deliver at scale, but what happens at local community levels is out of the picture. This also means that most aid is in relief mode. A trade-off thus seems to exist between delivering at scale and providing context-specific aid that should be weighed on its effectiveness.
- How land tenure works if there is no functioning government was another point of discussion. Despite a lack of formal government improvements can be made: collaborating with traditional authorities and other informal institutions for instance. Research shows that where goodwill was established through such an approach, there are positive spillover effects to other communities. A bottleneck for many local people is that they need to pay for the registration of land. Such registration is also very sensitive, a Western perspective mixes with a local perspective here, where for instance a different meaning and importance can be placed on trees rather than land.
- Participants also discussed the shift from armed conflict to conflict between communities. In the case of Mali conflicts between pastoralists and farmers can be more dangerous than conflict between armed groups and the government. A focus on the latter type of conflict has risks, in the case of South Sudan for instance programming was halted in order to make a point towards the South Sudanese government. These programmes however provided a base of trust between various communities, which then fell away and resulted in further conflict. An example of the type of programme was the Reconstruction Tender that brokered

agreements between farmers, pastoralists and agropastoralists to establish communication and governance on migratory routes, planning for harvests, including sanctions for trespassers enforced by groups of elders of committees.

- Participants agreed that a dialogue on such issues with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other policymakers is very important. For instance on the need for flexibility. As South Sudan has been unstable since the eighties participants were aware of the need for a plan A, B and C. However the policy environment is often limiting in this respect. Linking relief and development is not a linear process, which is also recognized by the EU in their focus on resilience. However despite this focus the EU provides very little room for programme adaptation and budgeting flexibility. The UNSC resolution can be a tool to further such discussions as we move from a focus on gaining political support for the resolution to looking at how to implement it.
- Furthermore the resolution is useful to engage governments when already working in certain contexts. From a civil rights perspective it is useful in South Sudan and Mali where it has the potential to open up further dialogue and support advocacy of local community groups. In a context like Syria, where humanitarian access is used as a tool in the conflict – admitting aid workers easily into certain areas, hindering them in others – it supports efforts to uphold international humanitarian law. Conflict sensitive implementation is required however, as implementation of land registration can also be strategically used by governments to prevent displaced persons from returning.

Group work: recommendations

For the group work participants were divided up into three groups to discuss recommendations in two rounds, first a round on recommendations for practice which asked participants to jointly think about: 1) ‘what are emerging good practices in your organization?’; and 2) ‘what is needed to improve practice?’ Then a second round with recommendations for the Dutch government, focusing on the question: ‘What should the Netherlands do as a donor, and as a government, to support interventions on the humanitarian-development nexus?’ The following is a summary of those recommendations.

Recommendations for practice

Three trends are visible in the recommendations formulated by the participants: 1) working from the bottom-up by connecting with, and building on, local communities, governance and stakeholders and their knowledge; 2) putting a greater focus on cross-sector or cross-cutting thinking; 3) supporting flexible ways of working so that programming can adapt to changing circumstances.

Some recommendations below are applicable for most interventions in LMICs, while others are more specifically aimed at supporting the humanitarian-development nexus. Importantly however, in the fragile settings of protracted crisis and conflict areas such recommendations do not only promote effectiveness but often also contribute to preventing (further) conflict or crises from emerging and therefore have extra significance.

- Design, planning & implementation of interventions:
 - Scale up resilience programmes through humanitarian aid financing.
 - Focus more on cross-sector thinking.
 - Ensure that organizations have sufficient time to properly plan together with stakeholders.
 - Prioritize support of local communities, build on local knowledge for support and scale.
 - Use local structures as a pathway, start with existing structures such as community action groups at state and national level to start a conversation.
 - Support communities that host internally displaced persons (IDPs) as these are often overlooked and left out of programming.
 - Cooperate with local governments, even when they do not function well.
 - Use data as a resource to inform and support local action, as for example in the 510 initiative by the Netherlands Red Cross.
 - Link up with local resource centres for donors such as the Saferworld resource facility in South Sudan.
 - Focus on women & girls empowerment, also when working with land rights.
- Enabling (policy) environment:
 - Support flexibility for programmes in rapidly changing contexts with regards to deliverables and expected results.
 - Create a flexible fund, specifically used to support interventions that are confronted with changing contexts.

Recommendations for the Netherlands as a donor and as a government

For the Netherlands there are two tracks through which it can promote further action that follows up on the resolution. Firstly, use its position as a donor to improve development practice. Secondly, promote implementation of the resolution on the global stage via international institutions.

Some trends can be seen in the recommendations formulated by the participants. Firstly, as a donor, the Netherlands can: 1) ensure better local monitoring and learning practices to facilitate flexible and adaptive programming; and, 2) strengthen links between different types of programmes (development, humanitarian, advocacy) and promote joint working. Secondly, as a government the Netherlands can: 1) function as an ambassador for the resolution on the international stage by building coalitions, using it to engage other governments, and promoting accountability for violations of international (humanitarian) law.

- What the Netherlands can do as a donor:
 - Increase the focus on transitioning from humanitarian aid to development programming as a donor, for instance through resilience programming.
 - Develop a joint framework for development organizations and their funding MFAs to anticipate and adapt to emergency situations, for instance through the Dutch Relief Alliance.
 - Ensure that humanitarian and development programming links to each other, including linking humanitarian programming to activities for Dialogue & Dissent.

- Promote the linking of lobby and advocacy activities with programming and vice versa.
- Ensure better evaluation and monitoring practices among humanitarian actors
- Recognize the role of donors in creating incentives, use this to for instance promote local consultation and agency coordination.
- Make use of skilled people on the ground, both local and international, these can be very valuable – especially at embassies.
- Promote continuous local monitoring and evaluation for flexible and adaptive programming, possibly coordinated at embassy level.
- What the Netherlands can do as a government:
 - Keep the conversation on conflict and hunger going after adoption of the resolution. Be an ambassador, cooperate with incoming UNSC members such as Belgium and Germany and also include southern countries.
 - Use the resolution to address other governments, for instance in relation to the conflict in Yemen. Further focus can be on South Sudan and Nigeria.
 - Explore linkages between the resolution and the Prevention & Sustaining Peace agendas of the UN, and the PBSO fund.
 - Focus on increasing accountability for those that use hunger as a weapon of war, use big data, satellites and develop other instruments to hold responsible parties to account.

Participants

Harma Rademaker	Cordaid
Rojan Bolling	Food & Business Knowledge Platform
Frans Verberne	Food & Business Knowledge Platform
Sekou Doumbia	ICCO-Mali
Arthur van Buitenen	IDLO
Megan Price	Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law
Hashi Abdullahi	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Joost Möhlmann	The Netherlands Red Cross
Noelina Nabwile	Saferworld
Pien Klieverik	Save the Children
Annegré de Roos	Save the Children
Iris Siers	Save the Children
Frank van Kesteren	The Broker
Kim van Wijk	The Broker
Jan Jaap van Oosterzee	PAX
Sam de Greve	Plan Nederland
Gerrit-Jan van Uffelen	VHL Wageningen