

## Theme 8 - Food Security, Conflict and Resilience

Conference “Research & Policy: two peas in a pod? A dialogue for food security impact”

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### Key statements

- How do we balance inclusiveness and productivity and employment objectives for food and nutrition security interventions in conflict-prone situations? Conflict sensitive designs are needed for interventions that are supported by development practitioners, governments and the private sector. What risks are acceptable?
- Without conflict-sensitive design interventions will lead to induced conflicts by not taking into account existing (invisible) conflict dynamics, which will have adverse effects on vulnerable communities.
- Governments have a responsibility in designing food security interventions in a conflict-sensitive manner and cannot leave this to the private sector, that is driven by other motives (i.e. profit).

### Rationale

Populations facing high food insecurity and poverty are increasingly concentrated in conflict affected countries, in total affecting an estimated 1.5 billion people. There is a vicious link between food insecurity and conflict. Often food insecurity increases as a direct consequence of violence, as crops and assets are destroyed or stolen. Damage to infrastructure and increased insecurity undermine market activity driving up the price of food. In addition, as people (temporarily) migrate, fields are left untended and household resources are needed for emergency expenses (such as shelter, health, etc).<sup>1</sup> At the same time, food insecurity and poverty can trigger violent responses<sup>2</sup>, especially under weak institutions, authoritarian regimes, the absence of social safety nets and poor economic performance in the rest of the economy.

The key policy question is how Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) interventions can contribute to transforming conflict and promoting stability. This includes a particular focus on conflict affected contexts, as the factors that caused conflict within and between groups are likely to remain key sources of tension. Research has shown that 60% of conflicts recur within ten years, and contexts suffering high food insecurity have a 40% higher risk of relapsing into violent conflict.<sup>3</sup> Understanding the key conflict dynamics is therefore essential when food security interventions are designed and supported in fragile contexts. We draw on lessons learned from ongoing NWO funded projects on interventions to increase food security and resilience in conflict affected countries and highlight their interaction with key drivers of conflict and stability, including potential risks and ways forward. We identify several debates relevant for policy that directly link to GCP and ARF projects.

### Key lessons, good practices and experiences from ARF and GCP projects

1. **Commercialization of agriculture vs resilience and inclusiveness.** Traditionally, interventions in the agricultural sector focused on direct support to smallholder farmers by NGOs or governments. Since 2008, there has been a surge in large scale commercial investments driven by private enterprises. Driven by global food shortages and rising fossil fuel prices investors have reconsidered Africa as the continent with apparently the largest reserves of under-utilized agricultural land. Do these investments help transform the productivity and contribute to development? In theory yes, but the approach has been controversial. Opponents refer to the rise in investments in agriculture as a “land grab”, asserting that in particular land acquisitions damage the livelihood opportunities of the rural poor. There is an acute risk for conflict affected countries where often food insecurity is high and the potential for conflict relapse is high.

This debate directly links to GCP-1 project [Helping Poor Farmers Grow Money: Sustainable Cocoa Productivity and Socio-Economic Impacts of International Investments in Sierra Leone](#). In Sierra Leone, we examine livelihood impacts of a large-scale biofuel plantation. We report findings consistent with a land access and labour supply shock, some people immediately lose out. In the

<sup>1</sup> Chen, S., N. Loayza and M. Reynam-Querol, 2008. The aftermath of civil war. World Bank Economic Review 22: 63-85

<sup>2</sup> Miguel, E., S. Satyanath and E. Sergenti, 2004. Economic shocks and civil conflict: An instrumental variables approach.

Journal of Political Economy 112: 725-753.; Dube, O. and Vargas, J. F. (2013). Commodity price shocks and civil conflict:

Evidence from Colombia. The Review of Economic Studies, 80(4):1384–1421.; Nunn, N. and Qian, N. (2014). US food aid and civil conflict. The American Economic Review, 104(6):1630–1666.

<sup>3</sup> [FAO \(2016\) Investing in resilience to sustain rural livelihoods amid conflict. Technical note; PRIO \(2016\) Conflict recurrence](#)

short and long run we find a substantial drop in access to land and (agricultural) incomes, thereby reducing food security. For land owners and plantation workers this is compensated by surface rents and labour income, resulting in increased village inequality. This may increase conflict risk within communities. Without paying attention to how investments impact the resilience of communities these interventions risk doing more harm than good.

2. **Climate Change Interventions.** There is a push to drive agricultural modernization processes through private sector investments in the Global South. In West African drylands, land concessions required for such agri-businesses are often negotiated through customary authorities, and inject large amounts of money into localized rural systems with low cash bases. Such transactions serve to increase area under crop cultivation on an inter-seasonal basis, as financial spill-overs enable farmers to purchase larger quantities of agricultural inputs and prepare larger tracts of land. Simultaneously, such direct and indirect cash flows also result in larger local herd sizes and an increase in the number of locally-owned cattle, as cash is exchanged for cattle, largely regarded as an interest-accruing, savings buffer. Larger herd sizes, in turn, draw in Fulani pastoralists in search of employment as contract herders for local cattle owners. The simultaneous increase in land under cultivation and increase in the number of cattle increases pressure on natural resources, and increases the risk of conflict between farmers and Fulani pastoralists. Taking Integrated Water and Agricultural Development (IWAD), a private sector, large-scale irrigation initiative in northern Ghana as a case study, the pitch identifies an inevitable pathway from large-scale land acquisitions for agriculture in West-African drylands, to an increase in conflict (and/or the risk thereof) between sedentary and Fulani pastoralists.

This debate directly links to NWO funded project on [climate adaptation strategies and conflict in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Kenya](#).

3. **Building resilience; working in a post-conflict setting.** Working in a post-conflict setting implies working in areas with reduced economic and agricultural development and according issues with food security. The ARF-2 [Cassava Applied Research for food security in Northern Uganda](#) deals with such issues and is in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of implementation. It has registered positive impact and key learnings. The co-creation approach applied to generate, and share knowledge inspires confidence, active participation, and mutual respect among farmers; organizing and building capacity of farmers in leadership and conflict management enhances social cohesion and reduces violence. The participatory approaches which engage farmers in all activities of the project facilitate faster learning, self-esteem, and guaranteed sustainability. Farming as a business increases penetration and consumption along the value chain however with underdeveloped/ absence of the private sector especially markets, production and sustainability is affected. Effective implementation of relevant standards and policies is critical to farmers penetrating modern value chain markets

### Purpose of the session

The session aims to facilitate learning and continued exchange between researchers and policy on key issues around the types of interventions that are needed to decrease food insecurity in conflict affected countries, and how in turn these interventions should be designed in a conflict-sensitive manner. It directly relates to policy priorities captured in SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, and SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

### Outcomes of the session

- Increased attention amongst researchers as well as policymakers working on FNS for the risks and opportunities related to conflict dynamics and how enhance conflict-sensitiveness of interventions
- Increased coordination and exchange of knowledge on conflict dynamics and how to integrate this into activities between practitioners, researchers and policy makers working in the fields of FNS; who is working on what, where and how and what linkages can be made.
- Outline of an international learning agenda for prioritizing future research and interventions to include a focus on conflict dynamics and conflict-sensitiveness (i.e. what interventions? what are outcomes of interest?)
- Increased understanding of how Dutch FNS programmes can promote food security, stability and resilience in conflict affected contexts.