



Food Assistance Convention

**NARRATIVE REPORT ON FOOD ASSISTANCE
BY MEMBERS OF THE
FOOD ASSISTANCE CONVENTION
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ACRONYMS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CAR	Central African Republic
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EU	European Union
FAC	Food Assistance Convention
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAQR	Food Aid Quality Review
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FY	Fiscal Year
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
MT	Metric tons
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RoYG	Republic of Yemen government
SAM	Severe acute malnutrition
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Food Assistance Convention (FAC) includes many of the largest humanitarian food assistance donors that together seek to save lives, reduce hunger, improve food security and improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations around the world. To achieve these goals, the 14 FAC members provide a defined minimum level of food assistance on an annual basis. In 2015, this assistance totaled more than USD 2.63 billion dollars – the largest commitment to date and absolutely necessary in order to address global needs.

Following the unprecedented number of emergencies across the globe in 2014, large-scale crises continued to be the norm in 2015, stretching global humanitarian resources to provide critical, life-saving interventions. In 2015, nearly 60 million people were displaced – the most in recorded in history. FAC members rose to the challenge and provided life-saving interventions throughout the world: tackling man-made crises – like those in Syria and Yemen – as well as natural devastations like the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa and the global El Niño-related phenomena.

In Syria, the protracted crisis continues to impact the war-torn nation as well as populations displaced regionally, increasing the number of people at risk of food insecurity. FAC members responded to the challenge, employing a variety of programs including delivery of in-kind food aid packages, vouchers and cash for food as well as nutrition interventions.

In West Africa, FAC members also ensured that those impacted by the Ebola virus outbreak did not face food insecurity as a result of quarantine or other disruptions in the marketplace. In Nepal, FAC members helped the country swiftly return to normal after two devastating earthquakes struck in the spring of 2015, leaving 1.4 million people in need of emergency humanitarian assistance.

Globally, FAC members responded to the worst El Niño event in more than 50 years. Even before droughts reduced harvests, worsened livestock and shrunk labor opportunities, FAC members anticipated needs through early warning systems. By prepositioning assets and providing in-kind assistance quickly, FAC members averted a large-scale famine in Ethiopia and mitigated negative impacts in Central America and Southern Africa.

FAC members also continue to strengthen ties among donors by collaborating on key overarching policies. In preparation for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, FAC members participated in key discussions that could help integrate humanitarian and development assistance, including how to improve impact and cost-effectiveness (“the Grand Bargain”).

Putting policy into practice, several FAC members initiated government-wide responses to tackle hunger, including the integration of more multi-purpose cash transfers in food assistance interventions. A few members also identified multi-sectoral activities that have improved the nutritional component of their work, recognizing the need to address both the quality of the food as well as the practices of their beneficiaries in order for the assistance to achieve its full potential impact.

GENERAL CONTEXT

About the Food Assistance Convention

The Food Assistance Convention (FAC) entered into force on January 1, 2013, following the depositing of instruments of ratification of the Food Assistance Convention by six parties – Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Japan, Switzerland and the United States of America. The FAC is the latest in a long series of such multilateral cooperation instruments in operation since 1967, most recently preceded by the Food Aid Convention 1991.

The FAC expands the traditional focus of previous Food Aid Conventions that focused exclusively on commitments of in-kind food aid for direct consumption. The new Convention includes a broader toolbox of eligible activities and food assistance products, including cash and vouchers and products intended for protecting livelihoods, a greater focus on nutrition, as well as a commitment to improved transparency and accountability. The Convention also provides an important set of guiding principles for the Parties to follow in implementing their food assistance programs. Finally, Parties to the Convention now make their commitments in monetary value as opposed to metric wheat ton equivalent.

The objectives of the FAC are to save lives, reduce hunger, improve food security and improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations by:

- Addressing the food and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable populations through commitments made by the Parties to provide food assistance that improves access to, and consumption of, adequate, safe and nutritious food;
- Ensuring that food assistance provided to the most vulnerable populations is appropriate, timely, effective, efficient, and based on needs and shared principles; and
- Facilitating information-sharing, cooperation and coordination, and providing a forum for discussion in order to improve the effective, efficient and coherent use of the Parties' resources to respond to needs.

To achieve these objectives, FAC Parties have committed to provide a defined minimum level of food assistance on an annual basis. Additionally, Parties have embraced the notion of transparency in all food assistance operations. To support this commitment, FAC Parties will report food assistance activities publicly, by country on an annual basis. This report is the narrative component of the Parties' 2015 annual reporting. It includes information on how each Party's food assistance policies, programs and operations have contributed to the objectives and principles of the Convention for the reporting year.

The FAC is also a forum for Parties to share information and best practices in food assistance delivery. Meeting twice annually, the FAC provides an open forum for Parties to discuss the most efficient and effective means of delivery of food assistance. Recognizing the changing landscape of emergencies and other assistance needs, the Parties have prioritized the consideration of new modalities for food assistance aimed at reducing associated costs, while ensuring that those most in need are reached.

The proliferation of serious and large-scale crises occurring simultaneously confirms the relevance of the FAC. Combined with the ever-widening gap between resource needs and available humanitarian funding, the incentive to develop innovative solutions is more pressing than ever. International financial commitments certainly have their part to play – they are a visible and tangible demonstration of a minimum response by the donor community and one against which members are held publicly accountable. This predictable and certain response is an important signal to our partners and to those affected by crises that the international community stands with them in times of need.

Humanitarian assistance should be seen as a multi-faceted response to improve the human condition during conflicts and disasters, as a first step in reinvigorating local business and agriculture and to helping people rebuild their lives and livelihoods. The forum provided by the FAC plays a key role in promoting best practices and shaping policies to encourage participating members to develop and implement innovative solutions to better respond to challenges faced by affected communities.

Reporting on Food Assistance Operations

Following each calendar year, Parties provide a report on food assistance operations, detailing how respective commitments were fulfilled. The financial commitments of the 14 Parties who have ratified, accepted and/or approved the Food Assistance Convention in 2015 are set out below, **totaling more than USD 2.63 billion dollars:**

Donor	Commitments in 2015	Equivalent in US \$ ¹
Australia	AU\$80 million	US \$56.11 million
Austria	€1.495 million	US \$1.68 million
Canada	C\$250 million	US \$186.53 million
Denmark	DKK185 million	US \$27.81 million
European Union	€350 million	US \$392.55 million
Finland	€6 million	US \$6.73 million
Japan	¥ 10 billion	US \$83.36 million
Luxembourg	€4 million	US \$4.49 million
Russia	US \$15 million	US \$15 million
Slovenia	€30,000	US \$33,647
Spain	€500,000	US \$560,785
Sweden	SEK200 million	US \$23.84 million
Switzerland	CHF34 million	US \$34.92 million
United States of America	US \$1.8 billion	US \$1.8 billion

In 2015, all members fulfilled their commitments and some even exceeded their commitments substantially. All members either kept or increased their commitments for 2016.

In line with the Convention, members focused on addressing the food and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable populations to provide food assistance that improves access to and consumption of adequate, safe and nutritious food. Parties also ensured that the food

¹ All currency conversions into U.S. Dollars were done via www.oanda.com for October 1, 2015.

assistance provided was appropriate, timely, effective and based on needs in line with the principles of the FAC.

Food assistance was delivered through: i) the provision and distribution of eligible products; ii) the provision of cash and vouchers; and iii) nutritional interventions. All funding was made fully in grant form. Food assistance was delivered avoiding harmful interference with normal patterns of production in recipient countries and international commercial trade. Food assistance operations were provided bilaterally, through intergovernmental or other international organizations, including the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) as well as other food assistance partners.

Members also placed considerable efforts on the facilitation of information sharing, cooperation and coordination, while also providing a forum for discussion in order to improve the effective, efficient and coherent use of the resources to respond to needs.

Committee Meetings

In 2015, members convened two meetings to review the current and prospective food situation in developing countries against the background of recent developments in world markets for grains, rice and oilseeds. Members also provided detailed information on responses to food emergencies, together with planned operations and policy developments.

During the first meeting, the committee discussions emphasized activities in the Middle East, including Syria and Nepal, as well as measures aimed at dealing with the impact of the Ebola virus in West Africa. A seminar entitled “Food Assistance, Gender and Accountability,” also took place in May 2015. The session sought to underscore the importance of gender issues in response to emergencies and the provision of food assistance as members and observers alike recognized the links between food assistance, gender and accountability.

In November 2015, the FAC held its second session for the year with discussions focusing on the food security situation in Yemen and South Sudan, as well as measures aimed at dealing with the impact of El Niño-related phenomena across the globe. A seminar also accompanied the formal session, focusing on the World Humanitarian Summit and the key role of the FAC in emphasizing the importance of the food assistance perspective. The FAC later issued a joint statement on the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul in May 2016.

More information is available at www.foodassistanceconvention.org.

OVERALL ASSISTANCE

Australia

Australia provides all food assistance as untied, cash-based support to WFP. In 2015, Australia provided AUD 111,470,000 (USD 78.2 million) in food assistance through WFP. Of this amount, one-third was un-earmarked funding under Australia’s multi-year partnership with WFP and the remaining two-thirds went toward funding targeting specific crises, but was not earmarked below the operational level. The combination of significant levels of core funding and minimally earmarked direct contributions ensures that WFP retains the flexibility to adapt its operations to

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manage evolving situational challenges and determine the most effective means of delivering assistance, including through commodity distribution, cash and vouchers and twinning arrangements. This serves to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of WFP's operations, assisting to meet the food requirements of vulnerable populations during a period of unprecedented humanitarian need.

Austria

Austria's minimum annual commitment for 2015 according to Article 5 of the Food Assistance Convention remained unchanged with a commitment of EUR 1.495 million (USD 1.7 million). This pledge was met and exceeded in 2015 with a total contribution of EUR 6.7 million (USD 7.5 million). The total contribution comprised of EUR 1 million (USD 1.1 million) to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and EUR 5.7 million (USD 6.4 million) to WFP emergency operations. Austria also contributed EUR 5.05 million (USD 5.7 million) to the WFP Emergency Operation 200433, which provides food assistance to Syrian populations in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey. The funding was allocated in December 2015 and implemented in both 2015 and 2016, so only a part of the contribution (EUR 346,515.75 or USD 388,642) is reported for 2015. The total Austrian contribution implemented in 2015 amounts to EUR 1,553,100 (USD 1.7 million).

Canada

Canada exceeded its CAD 250 million (USD 186.5 million) minimal annual commitment under the Convention and provided food assistance through 20 different United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Canada's estimated contribution of funding in food assistance amounted to CAD 331.5 million (USD 247.3 million). WFP continues to receive the bulk of Canada's food assistance funding, which amounted to 65 percent of Canada's total food assistance allocations in 2015. Canada is WFP's fourth largest bilateral donor. The Micronutrient Initiative and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank received 11 and 8 percent of Canada's contribution respectively and the balance was provided to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as well as Canadian and international NGOs.

The provision of food for consumption remains an important portion of activities undertaken by Canada's food assistance implementing partners, accounting for 52 percent of activities. This is a notable shift from 2014, where this intervention accounted for 59 percent of all expenditures. 2015 saw a significant increase in nutrition programming, with a total of 19 percent of Canada's overall contribution, up from 13 percent in 2014. Livelihoods interventions remained static from the 2014 figure of three percent. Cash-based programming represented 26 percent of the total eligible expenditures in 2015. Breaking this down further, cash represents 29 percent and vouchers represents 71 percent of this total.

European Union

The European Union's (EU) commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2014 was EUR 300 million (USD 336.5 million); for 2015 it was increased to EUR 350 million (USD 392.6 million). The EU exceeded its commitment comfortably in 2015. Total food assistance and nutrition allocations from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and

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Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) in 2015 were EUR 554.9 million (USD 622.4 million), of which EUR 130.3 million (USD 146.2 million) have been allocated to nutrition-related interventions. More than 64 percent of ECHO's food assistance was implemented via three partners: WFP received EUR 164.1 million (USD 184.1 million) (39 percent), ICRC received EUR 67.3 million (USD 75.5 million) (16 percent) and Save the Children EUR 38.7 million (USD 43.4 million) (nine percent).

Almost one-third of the total funds allocated are linked to cash-based interventions, increasing from 2014. Food assistance still represents the major sector using cash, followed by shelter and non-food items. In the humanitarian food assistance sector, allocations jumped from 41 percent in 2014 to an estimated 55 percent in 2015.

Japan

In 2015, Japan contributed more than 19.5 billion yen (USD 162.6 million) as food assistance, which substantially exceeded the amount of its minimum annual commitment, 10 billion yen (USD 83.4 million). This included bilateral food assistance projects through international organizations such as the WFP and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Russia

In 2015, the Russian Federation sought to end hunger and malnutrition through both multilateral and bilateral activities. For 2015, Russia's total food assistance and nutrition allocations were USD 61.78 million, not including associated project costs, and supported 14 countries. This contribution exceeded Russia's minimum annual commitments (USD15 million for 2015) more than 4.1 times.

Russia contributed about USD 43.2 million to 11 eligible countries under WFP. The biggest beneficiaries were Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (USD 20.6 million), North Korea (USD 6 million), and Syria (USD 3 million). In addition to food assistance, Russia also made a contribution to WFP for costs related to the development and introduction of stable projects of school feeding in Armenia (up to USD 3 million), Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (up to USD 6.6 million).

Spain

Spain's commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2015 was EUR 500,000 (USD 560,865); nevertheless, Spain disbursed more than EUR 13 million (USD 14.6 million) that year. In 2015, the United Nations implemented 70 percent of the Spanish humanitarian food assistance. The WFP received a total allocation of EUR 5.4 million (USD 6 million) (41 percent), followed by UNICEF with EUR 2.25 million (USD 2.5 million) (17 percent), FAO with EUR 1.2 million (USD 1.3 million) (nine percent) and finally, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with EUR 400,000 (USD 448,692) (three percent). The remainder of Spain's humanitarian food assistance (21 percent) was implemented by international NGOs: primarily, Oxfam with EUR 630,000 (USD 706,690), followed by Action against Hunger with EUR 569,542 (USD 638,872) and Save the Children with EUR 500,000 (USD 560,865), while nine percent was allocated via local NGOs.

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Food consumption has been the preferred modality of food assistance (48 percent) in context where cash and vouchers were not feasible, mainly in the Syria crisis and the Saharwi Refugee Camps. In other contexts, Spain has used cash and vouchers (18 percent) and has promoted multi-purpose cash transfers, mainly through UNHCR. Nutrition interventions were 20 percent of the overall food assistance, while livelihoods accounted 13 percent, mainly through FAO.

Sweden

In 2015, Sweden provided USD 91.5 million in total support to World Food Programme, of which USD 70.6 million was defined as multilateral, un-earmarked core funding.

Switzerland

In 2015, eradication of hunger and undernutrition remained a key priority for Switzerland. The provision of food assistance in acute and chronic situations was a crucial way in which the Swiss humanitarian mandate of “saving lives and alleviating suffering” was translated into practice.

Direct food assistance still plays an important role during acute food crises. However, Switzerland is increasingly supporting projects that aim to ensure balanced diets during food crises to enable people to become resilient and to cope without food aid. In addressing global food security challenges, Switzerland takes a comprehensive perspective. Food assistance is complemented by Switzerland’s global advocacy efforts and engagement to fight the root causes of hunger through supporting agricultural research, promoting small scale farmers and reducing post-harvest losses. Switzerland promotes food systems that guarantee access to adequate food even for the poorest and most vulnerable population. In its interventions, Switzerland particularly supports women to ensure that they gain equal access to food.

Switzerland works in close partnership with international organizations on food assistance. Among all UN Agencies, the WFP receives the largest amount of Swiss humanitarian aid and in 2015, Switzerland contributed USD 84.8 million. Switzerland provides WFP with expertise, cash and in kind contributions. Cash transfer programming is increasingly used as a form of humanitarian response. Switzerland strengthens the capacity of selected partners by providing qualified cash experts to partner organizations.

United States

In 2015, the U.S. Government showed its commitment to people in need around the globe by providing nearly USD 3 billion of food assistance, reaching nearly 53 million people in 59 countries. These contributions not only saved lives, but also rebuilt livelihoods, strengthened resilience and mitigated the impacts of future crises by facilitating disaster preparedness. They enabled partners to reduce malnutrition in women and children, increase agricultural production, improve water sources and sanitation, strengthen education through school feeding and address many other needs. Such development interventions made important contributions to the USG’s inter-agency global hunger and food security initiative, Feed the Future.

KEY RESPONSES IN 2015

When analyzing the key responses in 2015, it became evident that several FAC members supported efforts in Yemen and Nepal as well as regional responses related to the conflict in Syria, and areas affected by the Ebola virus, and El Niño-related shocks. That being said, a wide range of projects across a variety of contexts and countries were supported by the FAC members. The following section summarizes responses made by individual members.

FAC Member Efforts

Australia

Throughout 2015, Australia maintained support for populations affected by protracted conflict, food insecurity and displacement in countries across Asia, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. In addition to supporting shelter, education, protection and WASH initiatives through other UN and international agencies, Australia provided emergency food assistance through WFP valued at AUD 43 million (USD 30.2 million). This assistance targeted conflict-affected populations in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as refugee communities in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. This assistance was further supplemented by Australia's core funding, which in 2015 totaled AUD 37 million (USD 25.9 million) and was assigned by WFP to its highest priority and most underfunded operations. Australia also worked through WFP to address ongoing food insecurity in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar, Laos and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Additionally, Australia supported WFP's school feeding programs in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kenya, Laos and Myanmar. These interventions focused on food distribution to improve average daily nutritional intake and incentivize school attendance, particularly for girls, and many included the establishment of community gardens to increase local food production and improve the sustainability of school feeding programs.

A key response in 2015, Australia supported WFP's first humanitarian response in the South Pacific, following the destruction caused by Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu in March. Cyclone Pam affected almost 200,000 and WFP assisted more than 68,000 people. Australia's AUD 1.3 million (USD 911,976) funding contribution met 25 percent of WFP's Emergency Operation costs.

Austria

In 2015, Austria responded to populations affected by food insecurity, conflict-based humanitarian crises and natural disasters alike. Austria funded programs that concentrated both on emergency relief and immediate food assistance in Syria, Yemen and South Sudan. Austria also funded programs that pursued longer-term objectives with the provision of seeds and basic agricultural tools to ensure improved agricultural techniques, elevated sustainable living conditions and enhanced resilience in Ethiopia. Where reasonable and feasible, contributions were made through cash and/or voucher assistance in order to preserve people's dignity and support the local economy.

Additionally, Austria provided emergency assistance in South Sudan. An Austrian contribution of EUR 350,000 (USD 392,605) allowed the ICRC, with the South Sudan Red Cross, to distribute

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120,419 kg of sorghum to 12,036 beneficiaries (2,006 households) and 80,000 kg of pulses to 24,000 beneficiaries (4,000 households) for a month. This was part of an integrated intervention that aimed to address immediate food needs of people affected by conflict so that they could consume two meals per day of adequate quality that accounted for dietary diversity.

Canada

In 2015, Canada provided humanitarian assistance funding, including for food assistance, to help meet the needs of those affected by 34 natural disasters and complex emergencies in 52 countries (including conflict, food insecurity and non-recurrent health epidemics). Overall, with Canada's support, the 20 implementing partners conducted eligible activities and provided eligible products under the FAC that benefited populations in 76 countries.

Consistent with 2013 and 2014, countries experiencing conflict, protracted crisis, suffering from chronic food insecurity, or hosting refugees such as Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, and Somalia, are among the top recipient countries of Canada's food assistance funding, receiving more than CAD 136 million (USD 101.5 million) in 2015.

In addition to common responses discussed in the next section, one of Canada's key responses included helping flood victims in Burma. In July and August 2015, heavy monsoon rains, exacerbated by Cyclone Komen, caused widespread flooding and landslides in many parts of northern and western Burma. In response to the crisis, Canada provided CAD 2 million (USD 1.5 million) in humanitarian assistance, which was allocated among several partners to contribute to immediate life-saving needs, including the delivery of critical emergency food assistance; coordination of emergency food assistance programming and joint assessments on food security; support of livelihoods through cash-for-work activities, unconditional cash transfers, and distribution of shelter vouchers; rehabilitation of potable water sources and health facilities; and delivery of health care services. Specific to food assistance, Canada allocated CAD 500,000 (USD 373,100) to the WFP, CAD 500,000 (USD 373,100) to the ICRC, as well as CAD 160,000 (USD 119,400) through the Emergency Disaster Assistance Fund in support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)'s emergency relief operation in Burma. WFP, ICRC and IFRC's operations all included the provision of essential food items for flood-affected population.

EU

In 2015, EU assistance and nutrition allocations financed projects in 60 countries to provide relief to those in crisis. The Sahel region (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal) received EUR 153.5 million (USD 172.2 million) (28 percent), followed by Syria Arab Republic and neighboring countries with EUR 143.7 million (USD 161.2 million) (26 percent) and South Sudan with EUR 54.1 million (USD 60.7 million) (10 percent).

With a total of 2.5 million people currently food insecure, the Central African Republic (CAR) also remains a priority for ECHO since the current crisis erupted in 2013. In 2015, the total funds for humanitarian assistance dedicated to the country were of EUR 23 million (USD 25.8 million). The EU has organized repeated airlifts of life-saving items and aid personnel into CAR to help those affected by the conflict. Over the course of the year, the European Commission has also supported UN Humanitarian Air Services in order to facilitate the transport of

humanitarian personnel to remote locations throughout CAR, which would otherwise have remained inaccessible due to insecurity and very poor infrastructure.

One of the world's worst man-made humanitarian crises, the civil war in South Sudan has left more than 1.6 million of internally displaced and about 644,000 refugees since its beginning in 2013. Moreover, South Sudan hosts around 265,000 refugees from neighboring countries, mainly Sudan. In addition to the conflict, the country also suffers from recurrent natural disasters. Together, floods, droughts and displacement have drastically reduced food production; some 7.5 million people are currently estimated to be food insecure and in need of humanitarian assistance, 3.9 million of them in a particularly critical situation. During 2015, the EU assisted more than 57 million beneficiaries by providing more than EUR 54 million (USD 60.6 million) in humanitarian food assistance and nutrition projects in South Sudan, 44 percent in the form of cash-based assistance.

To address food insecurity, ECHO supports WFP in providing life-saving assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs). In July 2015, WFP and its partners reached 1.45 million people, at times resorting to airdrops. Children, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers were also given supplementary feeding to prevent them from becoming severely malnourished. UNICEF also provides an array of emergency services to vulnerable populations, especially children and women, covering nutrition and other areas. With ECHO support, UNICEF has reached more than 2 million people with life-saving aid, including mobile water treatment plants, therapeutic foods and vaccines.

Japan

Japan worked in 11 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Mauritania, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal and Togo to implement 13 food assistance projects, worth a total of JPY 4.6 billion (USD 38.4 million).

Through the WFP, Japan responded to food needs in Asia (Sri Lanka), Middle East (Palestinian Authority and Yemen) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Central Africa, Chad, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, Lesotho and Mali) to implement 18 food assistance projects (JPY 5.88 billion or USD 49 million). Japan and UNRWA provided food worth 630 million yen to Palestinian Refugees.

Japan also provided 1 billion yen in emergency food assistance, in cooperation with WFP, to displaced people in Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan State of Myanmar.

Additionally, Japan contributed approximately JPY 12.4 billion (USD 103.4 million) to WFP for the humanitarian relief efforts for conflicts and natural disasters via food and vouchers in Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Finally, Japan provided approximately JPY 1.1 billion (USD 9.2 million) in response to food and nutrition needs of refugees in Middle East, cyclone damage in the Pacific Ocean island countries, earthquake damage in Nepal and floodwater damage in Myanmar.

Russia

Through its bilateral partnerships, the greater part of Russian food assistance was distributed among countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the UN least developed countries. Russia also worked with a number of multilateral partners including WFP, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the FAO and the World Bank, as well as the nations which comprise G-20 and BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

In addition to emergency food assistance, Russia is actively engaging in development projects aimed at finding durable solutions to the food security problems. The Russian Federation, in collaboration with the WFP, has been implementing large-scale projects to support school feeding in the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. In 2015, Russia also committed USD 9 million to the International Fund for Agricultural Development for 2016-2018. This money will be used to boost the volume of agricultural production in countries with low per capita income and food deficits in order to improve the quality of food and enhance the well-being of the poorest population at large. In partnership with the FAO in 2015, Russia launched a three-year USD 6 million program to improve food security and agriculture in the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Spain

Spain's support in 2015 was concentrated in the Sahel region (including the Sahrawi Refugee camps in Southern Algeria, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Senegal) with EUR 6.5 million (USD 7.3 million), equivalent to 49 percent of the Spanish total food assistance and nutrition allocations. Following the Sahel, Spain devoted the second-largest portion of its assistance in the Middle East, headed by Syria and the neighboring countries affected by the Syrian crisis and followed by Palestinian territories and Iraq with a total of EUR 5.4 million (USD 6.1 million) (41 percent), and finally Latin America with EUR 1.2 million (USD 1.3 million) (9 percent).

Chronic food insecurity, together with high mortality rates and poor nutrition indicators, has remained prevalent in the Sahel. To maximize the impact of the treatment and malnutrition prevention interventions in Mali, Niger and Mauritania, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) is supporting a multi-sectorial approach linking key nutrition-specific activities with essential nutrition-sensitive activities in the sectors of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and education through our main partners in the region, UNICEF and Oxfam. Spain also supports livelihoods interventions, through FAO and the Spanish Red Cross, to support the food security and the resilience of the affected population.

In addition to its contributions to key responses described in the next section, Spain has kept its commitment on the humanitarian response to the Sahrawi Refugees in Algeria, listed as a "forgotten" crisis, according to ECHO. The Spanish contribution provided food and nutrition assistance as well as basic goods baskets including fresh goods to the Saharawi population through the Algerian Red Crescent and the WFP. AECID also funds CERAI, an NGO that has the objective of improving local mechanisms for agricultural production through sustainable land managements, home gardens, organic farming, institutional support, diagnostic and feasibility studies. The WFP is also exploring a new approach and developing the needed studies to implement cash and/or vouchers in the Tindouf refugee camps.

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Finally, AECID also provided ICRC with EUR 500,000 (USD 560,865) distributed for protection, assistance and prevention in the Philippines, South Sudan, Colombia, Iraq, Ukraine, Liberia, Syria, Mali and Palestinian territories. The food assistance implemented by the ICRC reached 11,697,100 beneficiaries, including food commodities for 10,653,200 beneficiaries, productive inputs for 764,275 beneficiaries and cash transfers (conditional/unconditional cash assistance, cash for work, and vouchers) for 279,625 beneficiaries. Nevertheless, this support has not been registered as food assistance since it is recorded as protection.

Sweden

In 2015, Sweden responded to humanitarian crises caused by natural disasters as well as conflicts. Sweden was the sixth largest bilateral donor of humanitarian assistance in 2015. Large parts of Swedish humanitarian support is provided as un-earmarked core funding to multilateral organizations, ensuring flexible and rapid responses to humanitarian crises as well as lower transaction costs.

Switzerland

In 2015, Switzerland responded to conflict-affected crises in Syria, South Sudan, DRC, North Korea and Iraq, ongoing crises such as the one in Ukraine, as well as natural disasters like the earthquake in Nepal.

In 2015, Switzerland provided CHF20 million (USD 20.5 million) in in-kind contributions, primarily Swiss dried skimmed milk. Swiss milk products target those most in need and are distributed to supplement food, especially within school feeding programs and health facilities to improve the nutritional status of vulnerable populations, particularly children. The products are distributed through Swiss NGOs and WFP. In 2015 Switzerland reviewed its in-kind program and, based on the outcomes of the evaluation, Switzerland is now exploring ways of adjusting its program. One possible direction is to move away from in-kind donations to ensure Switzerland provides food assistance aligned with international trends and the objectives of the Food Assistance Convention.

United States

Large-scale crises continued to be the norm in 2015 and U.S. emergency food assistance rose to the challenge of providing critical, life-saving interventions. U.S. food assistance programming also appeared in less visible crises by enhancing the ability of communities to feed themselves, promoting school feeding programs that bring and retain children in school, expanding agricultural sectors and by addressing the root causes of food insecurity in some of the poorest corners of the world. As Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 closed, FY 2016 threatened to be as challenging a year as the previous, if not worse, as a result of El Niño with severe droughts in Central America, Ethiopia, Haiti and Southern Africa.

The countries where the U.S. committed the bulk of its emergency resources included Afghanistan, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen. The effects of the Ebola health epidemic in West Africa, new and expanding conflicts in Yemen, Burundi, CAR and Lake Chad Basin, as well as El Niño-triggered droughts and floods, raised overall demands for food assistance. Altogether in FY 2015, the U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID) provided approximately USD 1.01 billion towards emergency programs in 41 different countries. These grants reached more than 16.7 million people in need through local and regional procurement of commodities, cash transfers for food and food voucher programs addressing emergency food security needs.

In an effort to build the resilience of families and communities to future shocks, U.S. development food assistance projects have continued to make positive changes for the chronically hungry and most vulnerable throughout the world. In total, USAID reached 7.7 million people in 15 countries through development programs. In FY 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s two development programs, Food for Progress and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition awarded a total of 428,288 metric tons (MT) of commodities and USD 442 million in food aid grants which supported more than 4 million people in 13 countries. Both USDA programs also had ongoing, multi-year projects funded in previous fiscal years that were active during FY 2015. With existing and FY 2015-funded programs, Food for Progress was active in 25 countries and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition was active in 26 countries during this period.

Key Common Efforts

Ebola Virus

In the midst of the Ebola crisis, another less visible crisis arose in West Africa in 2015: a food crisis. With borders closed, movement restricted and markets drying up due to lack of goods, food security deteriorated and families were going hungry.

Spain's AECID supported the population in areas affected by the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone through the WFP, which provided cash based transfers to accompany the health response for Ebola survivors in Sierra Leone.

The **European Union** has been active in the response to the Ebola emergency from the start, with a total financial contribution of EUR 2 billion (USD 2.2 billion) since the beginning of the outbreak – this includes funding from EU Member States. The Commission contributed EUR 660 million (USD 740.3 million) for development and early recovery assistance to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to reinforce the capacity of governments to deliver vital public services and facilitate a smooth transition to recovery. Development funds were used to strengthen food security, improve water and sanitation and to finance mobile laboratories for the detection of the virus and the training of health workers.

There were fears that the Ebola epidemic would have a massive impact on food security in the affected countries. However, though some prices did rise and some people on the margins of the economy suffered as a consequence, the worst-case scenario did not materialize. In-kind food support was only required for those communities under quarantine and then only for short periods of time. Sufficient food supplies for this were available in the region and ECHO supported some of the transport costs. Most food security issues faded as the epidemic waned. However, ECHO decided to support the hardest-hit communities through community agricultural support programs (seed and agro produce fairs) and livelihood support through direct cash transfers, especially to Ebola survivors.

In early 2015, the **U.S.**'s Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) estimated that more than 40 percent of Liberians, Sierra Leoneans and Guineans would experience acute food insecurity, and the U.S. responded swiftly and early to this crisis with USD 21.7 million of in-kind food assistance to meet pressing needs. Later, once additional funds became available, the U.S. provided over USD 90 million in food assistance for targeted cash-transfers and food vouchers.

Ebola also had secondary impacts on economic activity in all three countries. As a response in FY 2015, USAID provided WFP, UNICEF and several NGOs more than USD 75 million to help restore pre-crisis food consumption levels, agricultural production and improve livelihoods among vulnerable populations most affected by the crisis, in addition to stimulating market recovery. Activities included the provision of cash transfers and food vouchers to increase household food access, complemented by activities that aimed to increase food availability and restore livelihoods, such as agricultural input vouchers, cash grants to small traders and cash-for-work opportunities.

Finally, USAID also helped to restart screening and treatment services for children with severe acute malnutrition, through support to UNICEF that included in-kind ready-to-use therapeutic food. USAID also contributed to school feeding programs to help meet household food needs while encouraging school attendance in the wake of an extended suspension of schooling throughout the crisis. Further, USAID provided continued food support to Ivorian refugees who could not return home or pursue income-generating activities due to Ebola-related movement restrictions and fears.

El Niño

In the latter part of 2015, the world began to experience impacts of a strong El Niño event. El Niño is a periodic global weather phenomenon that generates both extreme dryness and excessive rains depending on geographical location. The El Niño that began in 2015 was one of the strongest events recorded since 1950. The droughts this El Niño has induced have greatly reduced harvests, worsened livestock conditions and shrunk labor opportunities in regions of Ethiopia, Central America and Haiti, while floods have negatively impacted areas of Kenya, Somalia and Southern Africa. The food security and nutrition impacts will continue even after this El Niño phenomenon declines in strength.

The **U.S.** programming in the regions most affected by El Niño has been substantial. In 2015, USAID provided USD 610 million to the Horn of Africa, USD 23 million in Central America/Haiti and USD 88.4 million in Southern Africa, a portion of which directly addressed the early impacts of El Niño. This response is ongoing and the U.S. continues to assist communities affected by El Niño in 2016. In addition, **Spain's** AECID, through UNICEF, Oxfam and Action Against Hunger, is providing life-saving assistance of the victims of the drought through nutrition interventions and cash for work in Guatemala and Nicaragua.

An **Austrian** contribution of EUR 250,000 (USD 280,400) to the ICRC was used to implement a program jointly with the Ethiopian Red Cross to help those impacted by El Niño. Funds helped South Sudanese refugees, host communities and vulnerable populations in Ethiopia with bean and rice seeds helping them to improve and restore their food production, so that they produced

at least 75 percent of the pre-crisis amount by six months of assistance. The program assisted 30,924 people returning to their places of origin in Bench Maji and Guji Borena and 16,740 people in the Gambella region hosting South Sudanese refugees.

Yemen

In Yemen, the conflict between the Republic of Yemen government (RoYG) and al-Houthi opposition forces has affected more than 1 million people and repeatedly displaced populations in the north of the country. In the wake of the Arab Spring, increased fighting between RoYG military forces and tribal and militant groups further limited the capacity of the RoYG to provide basic services, exacerbated deteriorating humanitarian conditions among impoverished populations and resulted in displacement in northern, central, and southern Yemen. More recently, rising fuel and food prices, high levels of unemployment, conflict and conflict-related displacement have left nearly half of Yemen's 24.8 million people food insecure, of which 1 million children suffer from acute malnutrition – the second-highest child malnutrition level in the world.

In 2015, the ICRC, with partial financial support from **Austria**, assisted over 750,000 people in Yemen, including IDPs, with food and non-food assistance, with a focus on the most vulnerable people. With the Austrian contribution of EUR 400,000 (USD 448,700) the ICRC was in the position to distribute food items to approximately 28,000 people. This assistance allowed particularly vulnerable groups, including orphans, disabled and the elderly to supplement their limited food intake.

The **European Union** allocated EUR 50 million (USD 56.1 million) in humanitarian funding to assist populations across Yemen affected by conflict and forced displacement, from which over EUR 14 million (USD 15.7 million) was allocated to food insecurity and malnutrition. ECHO also contributed EUR 2 million (USD 2.2 million) to assist refugees and migrants fleeing Yemen in the direction of the Horn of Africa.

The **U.S.** responded with over USD 54 million in in-kind food assistance and nearly USD 15 million in complimentary programs to address the rising hunger and the worsening malnutrition situation. USAID contributed more than 60,000 MT of in-kind food assistance through WFP. Although access to those most in need was constrained by the conflict, by September 2015 WFP was reaching over two million beneficiaries per month. A de facto blockade limited access still further, forcing up prices and making food assistance that much more critical for the 2.5 million Yemenis displaced, as well as those not directly affected by the conflict.

Before the crisis began, USAID was funding resilience building activities in Yemen, such as the construction of keyhole gardens, community water, sanitation and hygiene projects and agricultural training. Food assistance transfers were often conditional, linked to community participation in these various resilience building activities. However at the height of the crisis, the programs pivoted to unconditional food vouchers to help the most vulnerable in areas where markets had food available for purchase. For families who had no funds to buy food, the vouchers became a lifeline to keep food on the table.

Syria

The humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate in Syria with intensified fighting, high levels of violence, widespread disregard for the rules of international law and the obligation to protect civilians in Syria, and gross human rights abuses committed by all parties. Overall, 13.5 million people are in great need of humanitarian assistance. According to a WFP report, one out of three Syrians – more than 6 million people - does not have adequate access to food and 8.7 million need some form of food assistance. IDPs and returnees without sustainable livelihood strategies are among the most food insecure groups. Food assistance constitutes a major humanitarian priority for the people affected by the war.

Since 2012, **Canada** has been providing international humanitarian assistance in response to the Syria crisis as well as supporting development projects that aim to strengthen government services and infrastructure stressed by the influx of Syrian refugees in the region. Food assistance funding and activities supported by Canada in response to the Syria crisis have mainly been implemented through WFP and NGO partners. Partners have reported more than CAD 15 million (USD 11.2 million) in expenditures for eligible products for food consumption distributed to conflict-affected people inside Syria. Partners also spent more than CAD 26 million (USD 19.4 million) in market-based food programming, such as cash and vouchers, to support refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. This support has enabled vulnerable refugee households to access diversified and nutritious food in a manner that promotes human dignity and empowerment as well as respects the local economy.

During 2015, Syria was the country that received the highest amount of humanitarian food assistance from the **European Union**. ECHO provided close to EUR 144 million (USD 161.5 million) in humanitarian food assistance for Syria and neighboring countries affected by the crisis, (Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey). Within Syria, the assistance focused mainly on directly addressing the immediate needs of the population, with the majority of food assistance delivered in the form of in-kind distributions. In neighboring countries, support to the refugees was mainly through cash-based interventions, which is considered the most cost-efficient modality taking into account the dynamism of the local markets. Therefore, 75 percent of ECHO's assistance to the Syria crisis was made in the form of cash and/or vouchers. With EUR 54.4 million (USD 61.0 million), Lebanon was the country that received the highest amount of cash-based assistance

Spain provided EUR 3.5 million (USD 3.9 million) in food assistance to people affected by the conflict in Syria, including displaced and host communities within Syria and neighboring countries. In partnership with WFP, Action Against Hunger and Rescate International, Spain is providing food assistance inside Syria reaching thousands of people per month. Assistance within Syria has focused on addressing the immediate needs of the population, through the most efficient means (i.e. in-kind distributions and fuel for cooking), from Damascus but also through cross-border operations, to facilitate the access to remote areas. Save the Children is also implementing a cash-for-work project in Idleb that will contribute to the reconstruction and recovery of community assets that will benefit the entire community and stimulate the local economy. Vulnerable families that can't participate in the cash-for-work program received unconditional cash transfers.

In the neighboring countries welcoming Syrian refugees, Spain has followed ECHO's support of market-based responses, taking into consideration the dynamism of local markets, and offering

the highest flexibility to refugees in meeting their needs. Food and rent in Lebanon represent the main expenditures for the refugees.

For the fourth year in a row, the **United States'** single largest food assistance operation remained the response to the Syria regional crisis. USAID contributed nearly USD 579 million to reach five million people in need, both inside the country and to refugees in neighboring countries in the region. The U.S., through implementing partners including WFP and NGOs, reached families across Syria with family-size packs of locally and regionally procured foods. The programs acted quickly as the battle lines moved in order to serve people who were displaced, without homes or the ability to cook, by providing food that is ready to eat. The U.S. also sponsored an innovative program to help provide bread – the staple food of the Syrian diet – to food insecure populations throughout the country. By providing wheat flour to the local bakeries, the bakers were able to sell bread at a stable price to the local community, mitigating the high inflation that has affected many other items inside the country. As a result, bakeries were able to stay in business, pay workers and purchase additional supplies in local markets – encouraging stability, providing sustenance and providing a sense of community to the victims of war.

Additionally, the U.S. assisted Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. The conflict has driven record levels of displacement: one out of five people displaced globally is Syrian. By late September 2015, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey were accommodating more than 4.1 million Syrian refugees. Over the course of 2015, the U.S. provided WFP with USD 244 million to support its food voucher program, enabling more than 1.3 million Syrian refugees to purchase diverse foods in local stores and prepare meals with nutritious ingredients, including perishable commodities. These food vouchers provided to refugees also helped to restore a sense of dignity in their lives by offering them choice in purchases and allowing them to buy familiar grocery items in local supermarkets. In addition, the food voucher program has the secondary, crucial benefit of injecting over USD 1.2 billion into the economies of Syria's neighboring countries, including USD 625 million in Lebanon and USD 450 million in Jordan, which has created employment: more than 1,300 new jobs since it began.

Nepal

Two powerful earthquakes struck Nepal in 2015, one in April and the other in May. Almost 9,000 people died and over 22,000 were injured. After the second earthquake, according to the Forest Stewardship Council, 1.4 million people were in need of emergency food assistance. By the end of June, WFP had distributed food to over 1.9 million people. In some of the affected areas, where family food stocks had been partially lost and markets were recovering, WFP also worked with partners in a cash transfer program, allowing survivors to buy food locally and revitalize local markets.

Canada took swift and multi-faceted action which resulted in critical assistance delivered promptly to the affected population. Canada provided a total of CAD 27 million (USD 20.1 million) in humanitarian assistance funding in response to the crisis. Specific to food assistance, Canada allocated CAD 6 million (USD 4.5 million) to WFP and CAD 2 million (USD 1.5 million) to the FAO. Through WFP, Canada's support helped meet the emergency food needs of approximately 1.4 million earthquake-affected people, including the provision of targeted

nutrition assistance to 90,000 children aged 6-59 months and 50,000 pregnant and lactating women. Through FAO, Canada's support helped meet the food security and livelihood needs of approximately 1 million earthquake-affected people.

Australia contributed AUD 3.5 million (USD 2.6 million) to WFP in support of food assistance and logistics operations to meet the food needs of isolated communities. This included the establishment of creative delivery mechanisms, utilizing porters and donkeys along refurbished mountain trails to assist isolated populations.

Austria also contributed to WFP's efforts in Nepal, both to the in-kind and cash-based programs. From May to July, WFP provided 1.1 million people in 11 districts in-kind food rations of rice, pulses and oil, as well as Plumpy Doz, a ready-to-use supplementary food, for children aged 6 to 23 months and Super Cereal for pregnant and lactating women targeted through the prevention of the acute malnutrition program. Cash transfers were provided to approximately 117,000 people in two earthquake-affected districts, Makwanpur and Sindhuli, where markets were showing appropriate recovery.

To date, the **EU** has provided EUR 1.6 million (USD 1.8 million) for food assistance and nutrition in response to the earthquakes in Nepal. According to a joint assessment funded by the European Union, by November 2015 there had been a significant improvement across all food security indicators since the earthquake, likely due to several factors, including the large amount of humanitarian assistance provided, the start of the harvest of summer crops and the restoration of access to markets.

COORDINATION AMONG DONORS

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) – held in Istanbul in May 2016 - took place at a critical juncture, as an unprecedented level of humanitarian need is challenging the humanitarian system's ability to respond, driven largely by protracted crises and rising displacement. The WHS brought together high level leadership from 173 countries as well as UN agencies, NGOs, and technical to exchange ideas on how the international community can best respond to growing crisis and promote closer linkages with development. In 2015, many FAC members took steps to prepare for the summit, including seeking solutions to better address the humanitarian-development nexus as a key priority. While what is feasible in terms of increasing coherence between humanitarian action and development cooperation will differ depending on the crisis context, there continued to be a pressing need to reframe humanitarian-development cooperation in order to move beyond chronic and cyclical vulnerability. Certain sectors, such as food security, easily lend themselves to improved humanitarian-development cooperation, as a mix of food assistance, social safety nets (cash, food-for-work), improved seeds and tools and livelihoods programming can help reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience.

Australia co-hosted the WHS Pacific Regional Consultations with New Zealand, bringing together leaders of the Pacific nations to exchange views prior to the summit. Australia is also an active participant in the WFP Executive Board, the Good Humanitarian Donorship group and the state-based support groups for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNHCR and ICRC. In 2015, Australia's deputy permanent

representative to WFP served as President of the WFP Executive Board. In this role he worked to bring together the views of the various member Governments in shaping WFP's corporate policies and operational planning, as the largest global provider of food assistance.

Canada was a member of the Steering Group for the WHS 'Europe and Others Group' Regional Consultation, which was held in Budapest in February 2015. Canada's role in the steering group was to advise on key issues/themes for discussion at the consultation and act as a champion of the WHS by raising awareness of the event and encouraging active engagement. More specifically, Canada was part of the "Humanitarian Effectiveness" thematic team, which developed material to stimulate discussion both in the lead up to, and at the consultation itself. Discussions focused on system strengthening, accountability to effective populations and exploring a common framework for effective humanitarian action.

A United Nations panel on humanitarian financing, co-chaired by **European Commission** Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva and HRH Nazrin Shah (Malaysia), Sultan of Perak, provided recommendations to the WHS. The Panel called on donors and humanitarian organizations to reach a "Grand Bargain" – a common set of commitments to make the humanitarian system more cost-effective. Through a dedicated Sherpa process, donors and humanitarian organizations have been negotiating a final outcome.

In addition to the work surrounding the World Humanitarian Summit, FAC members reported on several other coordinating initiatives in 2015. **Canada** and the **United States** co-chaired the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative for a two-year period leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit, with a primary focus on encouraging donor convergence around best practices in the implementation of the GHD principles. This initiative aimed to improve effectiveness through increased coordination and dialogue among key donors. The **EU** led the GHD work-stream on evidence-based decision-making, and actively contributed to the development of operational best practices for donors. Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland are also active members of the GHD initiative.

The EU also strongly promotes coordination amongst donors in implementing cash transfer policies. In 2015, ECHO took part in the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, which was convened by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development to examine the transformative potential of cash transfers for humanitarian responses and the humanitarian system. The panel examined obstacles to scaling up humanitarian assistance and the implications for the current humanitarian assistance architecture of scaling up cash. A submission to the WHS was made reflecting the final report, published mid-September 2015.

During 2015 ECHO was also involved in significant funding to OCHA in order to promote inter-cluster coordination. The Commission provided funds to both the nutrition and food security clusters, in addition to others such as the health, WASH and shelter clusters.

In September 2015, **Russia** chaired the BRICS "The Global Forum on Implementation of Social Protection Programs for Food Security and Nutrition: Towards Partnership for Development" in Moscow. In addition to the BRICS countries, 22 developed and developing countries and 17

intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations took part in The Global Forum discussions.

As cash transfers become a more common modality for providing food assistance, the **U.S.** recognizes that it has become increasingly important for donors to coordinate and learn from one another on how best to implement and evaluate cash interventions as well as build the capacity of partners. In October 2015, the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) opened an office serving North America and based in Washington, DC, with funding from USAID. The North America regional office provides CaLP trainings in the U.S. and abroad; guidance and training regarding monitoring, evaluation and accountability for cash-based interventions and support for institutionalizing cash preparedness. In addition, the North America regional office has established a Cash Working Group starting in the U.S. and expanding to Canada that will share learning and potentially contribute to advocacy goals for the region.

POLICY INITIATIVES

Australia signed a new Strategic Partnership Framework with WFP. The partnership is a multi-year agreement, which includes a commitment of AUD 150 million (USD 105.2 million) in core, un-earmarked funding over the next four years. Australia's core funding to WFP will be supplemented with additional direct contributions as needs arise in response to both humanitarian crises and development challenges. The Strategic Partnership Framework forms the basis of Australia's ongoing work with WFP in the Asia-Pacific region and globally. Alongside the funding commitments, the partnership articulates mutual objectives for Australia and WFP, including enhanced disaster preparedness, strengthened innovation, partnerships with the private sector and a focus on empowering women and people with disabilities.

Austria focused on establishing a whole-of-government approach in food assistance by channeling the available funds through the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). It also focused on efficiency and effectiveness: the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management together with ADA have developed an internal criteria list for the selection of programs and projects. These criteria include: 1) the program adheres to the principles of the Food Assistance Convention; 2) the geographic region targeted within a country /region is based on the level of food insecurity and humanitarian need there and that beneficiaries are targeted according to their vulnerability; and 3) where possible and necessary, funds are made available for a priority country and/or region of ADC. Additionally, implementing partners are chosen according to their experience, expertise and level of access in the relevant context.

Canada took active steps to improve the effectiveness of international humanitarian action by engaging at a global policy level. Specifically, at the 42nd session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), on October 12-15, 2015, Canada keenly supported the negotiations of the Framework for Action for Food Security in Protracted Crises. The Framework outlines ways to improve the food security and nutrition of populations affected by, or at risk of, protracted crises in a way that addresses underlying causes and aims to help facilitate ongoing coordination amongst donors and recipients in general for food security in protracted crises, as well as improving donor coordination for specific responses under Food Assistance Convention. In addition, Canada continues to support the Rome-based agencies efforts to collaborate

effectively, building on the strengths of each agency. This advocacy for a coordinated response amongst key agencies has the potential to improve efficiency and impact.

In June 2015, the Council of the **European Union**, including **Spain**, adopted the "10 Common Principles for Multi-Purpose Cash-based Assistance to Respond to Humanitarian Needs", which indirectly contribute to the efficiency of food assistance delivery. The principles are the result of collaboration with Member States and with a wide group of humanitarian actors and stakeholders and complement existing guidance on cash-based assistance and policy positions on those thematic areas which lend themselves to a multi-purpose approach.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

The Pacific is the most disaster prone region of the world and presents challenges that demand a unique approach to humanitarian response. Geographically dispersed and isolated populations are not compatible with the UN's standard distribution model, necessitating innovations in logistics, telecommunications and preparedness. So **Australia** partnered with WFP, providing more than AUD 4 million (USD 2.8 million) to WFP to build its operational presence in the Pacific, develop operating models suited to the context and enhance the capabilities of local governments and civil society actors.

In addition, Australia initiated the Pacific Humanitarian Challenge in 2015 to seek innovative solutions from the private sector, academic institutions and civil society to the unique challenges that shape humanitarian response in our region. Australia is also promoting humanitarian innovation at a global scale through the Global Humanitarian Lab. Australia is one of two states among the founding members of the Global Humanitarian Lab, which include humanitarian agencies such as WFP.

As the largest donor, **Canada** contributed over CAD19 million (USD 14.2 million) to the establishment of the WFP Djibouti Logistics Hub, which was completed in 2015, and formally launched on January 20, 2016. The Hub both assists WFP in responding to crises and strengthens its capacity to respond effectively in the region and prepare for future shocks. Through its custom bonded container yard, the hub provides immediate savings on the handling of more than 4,000 containers of food commodities that WFP moves through the port each year. The storage facility will also enhance the efficiency of bagged cargo handling. In 2015, WFP moved about 500,000 MT of food through the Djibouti port – making it the main gateway for food entering Ethiopia, and an important trans-shipment point for WFP emergency operations in South Sudan, Yemen, and Somalia.

The **EU's** ECHO is a part of the SAM 2.0 initiative, which sets an ambitious, new agenda on making severe acute malnutrition (SAM) treatment more effective and cost-efficient and scaled-up. Throughout 2015, the SAM 2.0 initiative has identified key issues currently affecting SAM treatment scale-up, reviewed recent findings and material on related policy and practice and identified bottlenecks in order to put together an agenda and a five-year plan.

The EU and **Spain** also integrated "multipurpose" cash-based initiatives, while also considering the potential protection concerns that can arise from this kind of transfer modality and facilitating

a common program design. Spain has promoted multipurpose cash transfer with Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, mainly through UNHCR.

In 2015, **Russia** contributed USD 850,000 to the World Bank for implementation of a G20 project aimed to design guidelines on social protection programs in the area of food security in G20 member countries. The goal of this project is to share and disseminate successful experience of effective realization of such programs and contribute to the adoption of innovative approaches.

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN 2015

Australia works to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its food assistance by increasing investment in disaster preparedness and maintaining high levels of multiyear, unearmarked funding. Investments in disaster preparedness produce dividends of between 300 and 500 percent, by minimizing the loss of life and economic productivity. Additionally, through the agreement of the Australia-WFP Strategic Partnership Framework, Australia has secured the predictable flow of un-earmarked funding to WFP, supporting the efficient delivery of food assistance to WFP's highest priority and most underfunded operations.

The programs funded by **Austria** in 2015 showed again that relevant experience in the target country and strong coordination with the government or authorities as well as with other key humanitarian actors are of utmost importance to ensure an effective delivery of aid. Prior to the earthquake in Nepal, WFP was already working in collaboration with the Ministry of Agricultural Development and the National Planning Commission to strengthen the comprehensive Nepal Food Security Monitoring System, enabling key stakeholders to come up with evidence-based formulation of food security policies. The Nepal Food Security Monitoring System was already collecting, analyzing and presenting information on household food security, emerging crises, markets and nutrition from across Nepal. This proved to be a vital example of preparedness when the earthquake struck in April 2015.

Canada is a global leader in supporting nutritional interventions around the world and continues to work to improve programs that increase access to healthy and nutritious food, especially for women and children. As part of Canada's CAD 3.5 billion (USD 2.61 billion) renewed commitment to maternal, newborn and child health, CAD100 million (USD 74.6 million) of new funding was allocated to the Micronutrient Initiative in 2015 to support the "Better Nutrition, Better Lives" initiative. This funding will build off best practices by supporting the scale up and delivery of essential nutrition services to vulnerable target groups such as adolescent girls, pregnant women and newborns, while leveraging existing successful health platforms to reach target populations.

To address the growing gap between the scale of humanitarian needs and the resources available, the **EU** created the Enhanced Response Capacity funds. In 2015-2016, this funding built upon and consolidated successful investments to date in order to prioritize the promotion of innovative approaches, processes and products that will enable a more efficient humanitarian response to the evolving nature, and increased scale of humanitarian needs. Despite its relatively limited budget (EUR 15 – 24 million per annum) (USD 16.8-26.9 million) as a proportion of ECHO's overall expenditure, ERC has achieved significant leverage in making

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systemic and structural changes to improve the global humanitarian system. During 2015, ERC investments focused on two main priorities: 1) Support to the humanitarian system, through governance mechanisms and initiatives which address the remaining gaps in the implementation of ongoing reform of the humanitarian system, as well as projects in the areas of protection and access. 2) Support to innovation, through new approaches that are apt to trigger the identification of problems and foster problem-solving capacity leading to the development and implementation of new ideas that can ensure quality, effectiveness and positive impact on the ground.

In 2015, the **United States** developed a USAID Modality Decision Tool informed by the modality decision trees developed by numerous humanitarian organizations – including ECHO, Save the Children, Oxfam, Mercy Corps and ICRC. After reviewing the other models, USAID concluded none were ideal for USAID because all used a binary questioning process whereby a yes or no leads to either another question or a conclusion, ultimately leading to a single recommended modality. Therefore, USAID's designed its own tool and uses it to help which tool, or tools, would be most appropriate for a given response.

Additionally, the **U.S.** commissioned a Food Aid Quality Review (FAQR) to address mounting calls for changes to the specifications of key commodities to meet the nutritional needs of beneficiary populations. FAQR Phase II ended in 2015 after more than four years of implementing the recommendations set forth from Phase I. Phase II key accomplishments include updating and upgrading 21 food aid products through new micronutrient and macronutrient specifications in existing commodities, Fortified Blended Foods, and other specialized food products like Ready-to-Use Supplementary Foods and Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods. FAQR Phase II also conducted field studies in to provide evidence-based recommendations for further food aid programming. These studies have shown that smaller FBF bags improve the distribution process; social and behavioral change communication given along with vegetable oil improves compliance in Fortified Blended Foods preparation to increase energy and fat intake; and demonstrated the value of focusing on cost-effectiveness, not just commodity price. FAQR Phase III will begin in 2016 and conclude Phase II activities while responding to new food aid priorities.

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