

FOOD ASSISTANCE AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVING THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

INSTITUTIONAL LEAD

World Food Programme

MODERATOR

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THEMATIC FOCUS

Today, an estimated 2 billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected areas of the world, where they are extremely vulnerable to the impact of conflicts and disasters. There are more crises, affecting more people, and lasting longer today than a decade ago. Most humanitarian crises are not the product of any single factor or event, but of the interaction between climate change, natural hazards, armed conflict and human vulnerability.

For the World Food Programme (WFP), this is an operational reality. Over 80 per cent of its annual expenditure goes directly to conflict contexts where food insecurity is massive and humanitarian access to many areas highly challenging. It is evident that without an end to manmade conflict, it will not be possible to reach Sustainable Development Goal 2 on zero hunger by 2030.

In this context, WFP and SIPRI established a new knowledge partnership, which kicked off in September 2018 and initially examined four country case studies: Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Iraq and El Salvador. Initial lines of enquiry included the following: Are WFP's humanitarian and development interventions contributing to improving the prospects for peace? What could WFP do more, better or different to maximize such contributions and to measure them? Which partnerships should it invest in? Is WFP ensuring that its programmes are conflict-sensitive and do not exacerbate tensions?

The session presented some of the preliminary findings of the partnership and discussed overall linkages between food assistance interventions and possible contributions to peace.

SUMMARY

The discussion emphasized the importance of food security in conflict contexts, how it might affect countries in conflict, on the merge from conflict to post-conflict. The example of Liberia was used to elaborate on how food assistance can affect local communities positively. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417 on conflict and hunger was highlighted as an important step to acknowledge the link between famine and conflict. Food security was further discussed in relation to its possible impacts as stabilizing or as a driver for riots—therefore, food distribution and targeting should be done with conflict sensitivity.

It was shared that food security is of foundational importance when discussing prospects for peace: although food security does not directly build peace, it can contribute to its prospects. It was agreed that building peace is complex and one agent cannot build it alone. WFP does not have the aspiration to be a peacebuilding organization, but due to its operational presence in complex contexts, it strives to integrate conflict sensitivity. Several speakers highlighted the importance of working collectively towards a common vision at national level to build joint conflict sensitivity.

One perspective from the discussion was how the humanitarian principles and assistance can shift into stabilization and further into development. Humanitarian work was described as practical, such as WFP's food assistance; however, there could be improvement in how it is done. Collective action was emphasized as a key aspect of how to improve food assistance prospect to contribute to peace, two issues otherwise targeted by two different silos. There is further work to be done to move from abstract silos and create capacity to launch emergency response and to deliver at large scale. The humanitarian sector faces challenges in delivering conflict-sensitive humanitarian assistance and several panellists emphasized that a joint analysis approach could help create synergies to manage this task.



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.@SIPRIorg's @dansmith2020 reflecting on SIPRI's research with WFP on the question on food assistance and it's contribution to improving prospects for peace - session hosted by @WFP #SthlmForum

♡ 10 9:30 AM - May 14, 2019

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Screen capture taken by [screenshotguru](#) on Mon, 20 May 2019 08:58:57 GMT.
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KEY TAKEAWAYS

The international humanitarian system is recommended to work towards inclusive national ownership, and to further support and engage governments and civil society.

To prevent siloed responses, the panellists highlight the need for joint analysis that enables context-specific interventions with a common agenda.

Humanitarian actors are not actors of peace; however, they do have an impact in the contexts where they are present and can play a role to improve the prospects for peace.



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