



USAID
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**Roundtable on Responding to Emergency Food Insecurity through
Cash Transfer and Food Voucher Interventions**

Convened by the United States Agency for International Development

Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance

Office of Food for Peace

Reporting Note



March 8-9, 2011

Washington, DC

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Introduction

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has taken an active role in the use of cash transfers and food vouchers in addressing emergency food insecurity around the world. Building upon USAID's efforts in this area, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP) convened a roundtable of subject-matter experts on the topic of Responding to Emergency Food Insecurity through Cash Transfer and Food Voucher Interventions. The roundtable was held March 8-9, 2011, in Washington, D.C. Individuals representing the United Nations, Non-Governmental Organizations, multilateral donors, the World Bank and independent consultants gathered to discuss what can be done to improve current good practices specific to cash transfer programming and to discuss the implications for FFP's evaluation of proposals seeking assistance under the Emergency Food Security Program.

Roundtable participants and attendees were presented with the following objectives:

1. To provide experts an opportunity to offer recommendations on how to strengthen USAID's efforts to respond to emergency food insecurity worldwide using cash transfers and food vouchers;
2. To identify steps that can be taken to expand the knowledge and use of good practices of the humanitarian assistance community in responding to emergency food insecurity using cash transfers and food vouchers;
3. To identify possible research, evaluations or pilots that USAID could implement towards encouraging innovation in addressing emergency food insecurity with cash transfers and food vouchers.

With each of the three (3) roundtable objectives in mind, roundtable participants and attendees debated the following discussion topics:

1. Cash and Vouchers – When is it most appropriate to use cash transfer and/or food vouchers in response to food insecurity? How do you determine which modality is the most appropriate for a particular response to an emergency food insecurity situation?
2. How can cash transfer programs be structured to ensure an appropriate impact on food security towards saving lives and reducing suffering?
3. How can grantees undertake rapid assessment, design and scale-up of interventions within the context of an evolving food security and market situation?
4. What aspects of gender and the role of women should be considered in the development of cash transfer and food voucher interventions?
5. What are the linkages between emergency cash transfer and food voucher interventions and longer-term development?
6. What are the realistic indicators of successful cash transfers programs?

This report offers a snapshot of the discussion and highlights key issues, recommendations, good practices and research and evaluation specific to cash transfer

programming. FFP is grateful to roundtable participants for their commitment of time and effort in preparing for the discussion and their active engagement.

For additional information on FFP's Emergency Food Security Program, please contact the EFSP's team leader, John Brooks, at jbrooks@usaid.gov.

Agenda

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

- 8:00 a.m. Registration
- 8:30-9:00 a.m. Welcome from USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) and FFP Senior Management
- Dina Esposito**, FFP Director, Greetings from FFP
Dale Skoric, FFP/Policy and Technical Division Chief,
Roundtable Overview
- 9:00-9:30 a.m. **Lene Poulsen, International Consultant and Roundtable Facilitator** – The Day Ahead
- Nicolas Barrouillet, Cash and Learning Partnership Coordinator (CaLP)** – Scene setter: What have we learned from prior and ongoing cash transfer and food voucher programs?
- 9:30 a.m. Roundtable Discussion Begins
Facilitator: **Lene Poulsen**
- 9:30-10:30 a.m. Discussion Topic # 1: Cash and Vouchers – When is it most appropriate to use cash transfer and/or food vouchers in response to food insecurity? How do you determine which modality is the most appropriate for a particular response to an emergency food insecurity situation?
- 10:30-11:30 a.m. Discussion Topic # 2: How can cash transfer programs be structured to ensure an appropriate impact on food security towards saving lives?
- 11:30-12:30 Discussion Topic #3: How can grantees undertake rapid assessment, design and scale-up of interventions within the context of an evolving food security and market situation?
- 12:30-2:00 p.m. LUNCH
- 2:00-3:00 p.m. Discussion Topic #4: What aspects of gender and the role of women should be considered in the development of cash transfer and food voucher interventions?
- 3:00-3:20 p.m. COFFEE BREAK

- 3:20-4:20 p.m. Discussion Topic #5: What are the linkages between emergency cash transfer and food voucher interventions and longer-term development?
- 4:20-5:20 p.m. Discussion Topic #6: What are the realistic indicators of successful cash transfers programs?
- 5:20-5:50 p.m. Audience Feedback: Questions and Observations
- 6:00-8:00 p.m. Working Dinner for the Committee

Wednesday, March 9, 2011

- 9:00-10:30 a.m. Summation and Presentation of Findings
- 10:30-10:45 a.m. COFFEE BREAK
- 10:45-Noon Discussion and Arrival at Good Practices
- Noon Wrap-up and Final Remarks

Scene setter

What have we learned from prior and ongoing cash transfer and food voucher programs?

Mr. Nicolas Barrouillet, the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) coordinator, introduced the topic of responding to emergency food insecurity through cash transfer and food voucher interventions by offering the following scene setter in response to the question, “What have we learned from prior and ongoing Cash Transfer and Food Voucher programs?” The highlights of Mr. Barrouillet’s presentation are captured below.

The vast majority of international humanitarian aid is provided in-kind, in the form of food, seeds, tools, medicines, shelter materials and household goods. At the same time, there is a significant and growing body of experience with the provision of cash or vouchers as alternatives or complements to in-kind assistance. As experience with using cash transfers grows, so it has become increasingly clear that cash can play a part in assisting people at all phases of an emergency. Cash can support access to food, help to rebuild or protect livelihoods, help to meet people’s need for shelter and non-food items, support refugees and facilitate return and reintegration processes.

Cash Transfer Programming (CTP) in the humanitarian sector encompasses Cash for Work (CFW), Cash Grants (conditional or unconditional) and the use of vouchers. These modalities can be provided through diverse delivery mechanisms that seek to take advantage of new technologies, including mobile phone banking, smart cards and bar code readers. The use of these technologies to deliver cash transfers can help to ensure a timely, transparent and accountable humanitarian response, when used appropriately. For example, the use of fresh food bar coded vouchers by Save the Children in Dadaab camp in Kenya for a food security and nutrition program allowed Save’s field teams to process up to six thousand vouchers every 2 weeks, compared to a maximum of a thousand without the use of the bar-coded vouchers.

The range of actors involved in CTP for humanitarian response is increasing and now includes more actively national governments, banking systems and mobile phone operators. The engagement of these diverse actors, who are prone to use CTP for a wide range of reasons, challenges the humanitarian sector to establish new relationships and develop new ways of working. Some of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or private voluntary organizations (PVOs) that have worked with cash grants through the banking system have experienced difficulties as a result of not having a strong understanding of banking regulations, policies, practices, costs and capacity. This lack of knowledge hampers the capacity of humanitarian actors to effectively negotiate and advocate for their beneficiaries and design programs effectively. From the private banking sector point of view, working with humanitarian actors represents both an opportunity and a risk. In some instances, banks have opened branches to support a cash-based intervention but, once the program closed, the banks had to close their branches due to the lack of economic activity in the area.

Cash-based responses have a long history, despite their frequent portrayal as new and innovative. The extensive number of guidelines already in existence is proof that the humanitarian sector has passed the point where CTP can be considered a “pilot.” Rather, we are at the point where such CTP should be standardized towards improving the quality of the intervention. The Sphere Project will soon publish new standards among its set of guidelines that are set out in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response that will include a dedicated section on CTP. The new Sphere standards on CTP and the Good Practice Review are two key milestones in the recognition of the already wide range of experiences and achievements in implementing CTP.

Therefore, the question is no longer *whether* cash is an appropriate way to meet the needs of disaster-affected people, but *how* organizations, donors and governments can use cash transfers for maximum impact in line with their programmatic objectives and mandates. There is growing recognition and interest from NGOs, PVOs, the United Nations, and the donor community that CTP is a viable and accountable modality for humanitarian response.

Notwithstanding this wealth of experience, the need to gather and develop evidence-based research is still high on the agenda of the various humanitarian actors. The latest research on CTP encompasses considerations around cash and gender, livestock and cash, cash delivery mechanisms, and cash and nutrition, among others. Further areas of interest for future research include: comparative study on market assessment tools, CTP delivery mechanisms in urban areas, scale-up of CTP response mechanisms, cash and shelter, and CTP and the diversion of assistance.

One of the key necessities/issues recognized today by the humanitarian actors is the need to develop the capacity and skills of staff at every level in order to ensure the quality of implementation of CTP. The CaLP has developed two training workshops to address this need: a “basic” training aimed at humanitarian program staff, managers and support teams, which provides a general introduction to CTP as a tool in emergency response; and an “advanced” training aimed at taking humanitarian practitioners and support staff with cash experience to the next level in coordinating, planning, and implementing cash transfer programming. This training covers a broad cross-section of modalities and examines the lessons learned and innovations from recent cash-based disaster response programs. The CaLP is also working actively with other humanitarian actors that are developing or have already developed their own internal training and guidelines to ensure the development of standardized and harmonious practices around CTP.

Finally, all humanitarian stakeholders need to come together in order to share and assess the already extensive experience of CTP, develop new tools, and explore new areas and ways of using CTP in a multi-sectoral way. This process is essential in order to ensure the standardization and quality of the programs. To be effective and relevant this exchange and coordination needs to be made not only at the field level with a common assessment mechanism but also at the headquarters and policy levels to develop common standards and an understanding of the key challenges. For example, the CaLP, through

its cash focal point in Pakistan, has started this process that led to an enhanced sharing of experience in the flood response, a definition of the food basket, a common market assessment and price monitoring tools, and harmonization of the CFW rates.

Responding to Emergency Food Insecurity through Cash Transfer and Food Voucher Interventions

Discussion Topic # 1: *When is it most appropriate to use cash transfers and/or food vouchers in response to food insecurity? How do you determine which is the most appropriate for a particular response to an emergency food insecurity situation?*

The Topic: FFP's new initiative, the Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP), expands the range of implementation tools for emergency food aid programming. EFSP was established in early 2010 and uses funds provided by the U.S. Congress under the International Disaster Assistance account for the purpose of local and regional procurement, cash transfers and food vouchers, either in place of, or to complement, U.S. in-kind food aid.

With this new initiative comes a need for FFP to carry out analyses and develop guidance that will help determine which mechanisms are most appropriate in various emergency contexts. Various "decision trees" and other guidance have already been developed by multiple organizations, including implementing partners and other donors, which can provide useful guidance for selecting the most appropriate mechanisms in a given situation. However, given FFP's resource constraints FFP's decision-making tools must also take into account the relative resource availability of EFSP and Title II funds in order to allocate these optimally.

Discussion Summary: The topic was introduced by Mr. Nicholas Weatherill of ECHO. Among other things he discussed the need for developing appropriate "comparative response analyses" that are context-specific, considering the wide range of possible modalities, and allowing for the possibility of using multiple mechanisms in any given response.

The ensuing roundtable discussion raised a number of key ideas, including case specificity, need for market analyses, timing, and FFP-specific concerns.

First, the participants emphasized that in-kind distributions, cash transfers, food vouchers, and variants of these all have pros and cons in different contexts, and none can be considered to be best in all situations. Therefore decisions about which tool or combination of tools is most appropriate need to be based on case-specific comparative response analyses.

Second, the participants emphasized the key role of market analysis in carrying out comparative response analyses, as well as initial needs assessments. In addition, market analysis should be better mainstreamed into routine food security surveillance and assessments, to allow for better availability of baseline market data when emergency food crises emerge.

Third, timing is also a key consideration for comparative response analyses in a number of different ways. The first consideration is how quickly a response can be implemented and whether it is quick enough to meet emergency needs. Different mechanisms may be better able to provide food quickly to victims in different situations. Seasonality may also be important with different distribution mechanisms being more appropriate at different times of the year. It also may make sense to combine or sequence different responses. One example could be to distribute primarily in-kind food in the hunger/lean season, while using cash/vouchers in the harvest season. Another example could be to initiate a response with the quickest available mechanisms that could be replaced later with another mechanism that may be more appropriate due to an evolving situation. “Decision trees” therefore need to be dynamic, and consider different responses at different times.

Finally, FFP representatives on the panel highlighted concerns that are specific to its operating environment. One concern, by virtue of its mandate for using EFSP funds, is the need to ensure that cash transfers or vouchers are used by beneficiaries in ways that directly benefit their access to food. Thus, cash transfers that are used primarily to meet other (non-food) humanitarian needs would not be an appropriate use of EFSP funds. In addition, FFP must consider the availability of EFSP funds relative to Title II when deciding which funds should be used. Currently EFSP represents only about 20 percent of the overall FFP budget, and most of EFSP funds have been spent on the local purchase of in-kind food aid. DG ECHO, the other donor represented at the roundtable, reported that they are investing approximately 20 percent (or 60 million Euros) of their food security humanitarian assistance resources in cash transfer programming.

Recommendations: The following recommendations came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #1:

Donors –

- Develop a decision tree to guide decision making on when and how to use cash transfers and/or food vouchers, to ensure that any transfers directly relate to increased food access, and are consistent with its relative funding availability;
- Provide mechanisms for integrated, dynamic and sequential responses as appropriate that can combine the use of in-kind and cash/voucher responses;
- Provide donor-specific guidance to partners that reflect the donor’s decision tree mechanism.

Good Practices: The following good practices came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #1:

Donors –

- Consider the appropriate response modalities in coordination with other donors, either following the same modalities, or complementary modalities as appropriate;

- Make decisions based on sound market assessments and case-specific comparative response analyses;
- Consider timing concerns, including rapidness of response, seasonality of market conditions, and possible sequential responses;
- Include the following decision criteria: (1) market implications; (2) beneficiary needs; (3) timeliness; (4) cost-effectiveness; (5) consistency with FFP objectives; (6) implications for targeting (including gender issues); (7) coordination with other existing activities; (8) desirability of secondary impacts; (9) end use of resources provided; and (10) resource availability.

Research and Evaluation: The following research and evaluation suggestions came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #1:

- Donors and Partners --
 - Pursue additional research evaluating the appropriateness of in-kind distributions, cash transfers and food vouchers, the timing of transfers, and the various ways each may be carried out in different contexts individually or sequenced;
 - Seek out case studies and research on the immediate and longer term impact of cash transfer programming on local markets.

Responding to Emergency Food Insecurity through Cash Transfer and Food Voucher Interventions

Discussion Topic # 2: *How can cash transfer programs be structured to ensure an appropriate impact on food security towards saving lives?*

The Topic: The objective of FFP's EFSP is to save lives and reduce suffering through the provision of cash in response to emergency food insecurity. This discussion topic grew out of a desire on the part of donors and implementing partners to better understand what steps could be taken at the program-design stage to ensure an appropriate impact on food security and in turn save lives.

It is recognized that within the donor and implementing organization communities concern remains regarding the appropriate use of cash transfers by program beneficiaries. While donors and implementing organizations acknowledge that these concerns are not limited to cash transfers, the burden of accountability is greater for the transfer of cash as opposed to the transfer of in-kind food aid.

This said, program structure is in the hands of the implementing organization and is expected to be responsive to a host of factors, including market conditions, beneficiary preferences and accountability to the donor. How assistance is delivered is also a key element of program design and integral to beneficiary and implementing organization staff safety. The perceived usage of the intervention modality must also be considered and accounted for through ongoing program assessments, among other controls.

Discussion Summary: The topic was introduced by Ms. Megan McGlinchy of Catholic Relief Services. The discussion that ensued covered a range of key issues, including donor and implementing organization objectives and capacities, market impact, accountability, targeting, beneficiary preferences and choice, corruption, and flexibility. In determining how a program is to be structured, the implementing organization must first determine whether current market conditions support the proposed intervention. For example, is the local market stable enough to absorb the anticipated demand resulting from the proposed intervention? Can the market keep up with demand throughout the duration of the program? Beyond the quantity of the desired food commodities, are they of an acceptable quality? Additionally, what sort of assessment tool(s) will the implementing organization employ to measure the impact of the intervention on local market prices?

Unlike in-kind food aid, direct food distributions, and food vouchers, unconditional cash transfers give beneficiaries ultimate choice over how they use their transfers. Once it has been determined that food is available on the local market in a quantity and quality to meet the objectives of the program, and that the intervention is in line with the objectives of the donor and the implementing organization, there are ways implementing organizations can structure cash transfers to maximize their impact on food security towards saving lives. Targeting is key and requires a pre-intervention assessment of the

food insecurity status of an area or population in order to identify a subset of the most food insecure members of the population. It is important to consider gender context when designing programming, in order to maximize the household welfare and efficiency of the cash transfer. While some evidence indicates that cash transfers to women may result in more purchases that increase household welfare and food security than cash transfers controlled by men, this is not always the case, as seen in the Bangladesh case study conducted by the UN World Food Program (WFP).

The relative size of individual cash transfers is another key component in program design. For example, many implementing organizations have noticed that smaller, more frequent cash transfers favor the purchase of food over larger cash transfers. Exercises to determine beneficiaries' marginal propensity to consume during assessments can be used to influence program design. The Market Information and Food Insecurity Response Analysis (MIFIRA) uses a method for determining household priorities known as proportional piling to understand how beneficiaries would use their transfers when they are delivered in different sizes and frequencies.

It was widely agreed that the donor and implementing organization should consider preferences of program beneficiaries. Such preferences include the type of intervention (e.g., in-kind food aid, food voucher or cash transfer), the delivery mechanism and frequency (e.g., direct distribution, or electronic or paper transfers) and the type of food commodity. These factors, both individually and collectively, play a role in determining whether beneficiaries use their assistance in the way it was intended. Additionally, it should be noted that the amount of control donors and implementing organizations want beneficiaries to have will determine the delivery mechanism (e.g., cash transfer or food vouchers), and should be in line with the program's objectives and the organizational capacity of the implementing organization.

Implementing organizations should also consider security and the potential for corruption when structuring an intervention. An appropriately selected delivery mechanism will have considered the security of both beneficiaries and staff from the implementing organization. The selected delivery mechanism should not draw undue attention to the beneficiaries' receipt of cash.

Given the quick turnaround time associated with the submission of applications under FFP's EFSP, and the expectation that funds under the program are to be used to respond to the immediate food security needs of targeted beneficiaries, roundtable participants recommended that additional flexibility be built into EFSP grants. This includes granting EFSP awardees the flexibility to switch between interventions (e.g. cash transfer to vouchers or local procurement) based on the evolving situation, without having to re-submit additional documentation for review, analysis, and approval; or building into EFSP grants a contingency fund, tied to a certain percentage of the overall award, that could be used by the awardee should the circumstances surrounding an emergency food security situation change dramatically.

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial to maintaining a level of accountability with respect to the use of donor funds. Such monitoring can be accomplished on a number of levels, but, at a minimum, should include post-distribution surveys of beneficiaries, vendors and traders.

Recommendations: The following recommendations came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #2:

- *Donors --*
 - Coordinate with other donors on the development of funding and implementation guidelines;
 - Ensure program objectives are coordinated with other donors, implementing organizations, host governments and the larger humanitarian response community;
 - Expand guidance to highlight how cash fits into the donor's overall food security response strategy;
 - Grant EFSP awardees the flexibility to switch between interventions (e.g. cash transfer to vouchers or local procurement) based on the evolving situation without having to re-submit additional documentation for review, analysis and approval;
 - Adapt existing information systems on food security to better identify when and how to respond to food insecurity.

- *Implementing Organizations --*
 - Use existing assessment tools to determine the cause and extent of food insecurity;
 - Design programs in line with the donors' and implementing partners' objectives and the implementing organization's capacity;
 - Employ the appropriate staff in the development of cash transfer programming, recognizing that staff skills may vary between traditional food aid and cash transfer programming;
 - Build exit strategies into program design.

Good Practices: The following good practices came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #2:

- *Donors –*
 - Link response mechanism to program objectives and desired outcomes;
 - Improve transparency with stakeholders, including other donors and implementing organizations.

- *Implementing Organizations –*
 - Embrace new technologies when selecting among delivery mechanisms;
 - Include contingency/scenario planning in proposals.

Research and Evaluation: The following research and evaluation suggestions came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #2:

- *Donors* –
 - Fund evidence-based research specific to program design, monitoring, and evaluation;
 - Fund the evaluation of programs that combine or sequence in-kind food aid, food voucher and cash transfer programming;
 - Avoid duplicating existing assessment, research and analysis through improved coordination and sharing of information on planned and ongoing research.

- *Implementing Organizations* –
 - Collaborate with other implementing organizations on proposed research for more efficient allocation of available research resources.

Responding to Emergency Food Insecurity through Cash Transfer and Food Voucher Interventions

Discussion Topic # 3: *How can grantees undertake rapid assessment, design, and scale-up interventions within the context of an evolving food security and market situation?*

The Topic: The objective of FFP’s EFSP is to save lives and reduce suffering through the provision of cash in response to emergency food insecurity. This discussion topic grew out of a desire to better understand what good practices donors and implementing agencies could use in order to support rapid assessment, design and scale-up interventions within the context of an evolving food security and market situation.

This topic is particularly relevant and challenging to FFP and its implementing organizations under the EFSP due to the short-term nature of EFSP-funded interventions. Typically, EFSP grants last less than twelve months and most are approved based on a six to nine-month timeline. This does not leave much time for rapid assessment, design, implementation, and monitoring, much less re-design and scale-up in the context of an evolving food security and market situation.

Discussion Summary. This topic was introduced by Ms. Silke Pietzsch of Action Against Hunger USA. The discussion covered a range of issues, including the need for improved coordination and information sharing among implementing agencies, budgetary flexibility on the part of donors, and public-private partnerships that involve host governments. The discussion was introduced in three distinct parts: assessment, design and scale-up.

There are two market assessment tools that are commonly used in the context of an evolving food security emergency: Emergency Market Mapping Analysis (EMMA), which can be used in response to sudden-onset crisis; and MIFIRA, which can also be used for sudden-onset crises (e.g., when there is sufficient baseline data), but was designed for slow-onset and chronic situations. EMMA provides a comprehensive and holistic analysis of the overall market and offers donors and implementing organizations the opportunity to identify and evaluate vulnerabilities throughout the market chain, from producer to beneficiaries. The MIFIRA provides a combination or sequenced set of questions and corresponding analytical tools to help operational agencies anticipate the likely impact of alternative responses (i.e., in-kind food aid or cash transfers). The MIFIRA supports decision making through the use of a decision tree, and offers a response framework that can be applied to support response identification.

The distinction between the EMMA and the MIFIRA fuels debate about under which circumstances one might be more appropriate. They are both recognized as useful, so long as it is understood that at the beginning of an emergency we often don’t have the time to wait for such assessments and must rely on existing data towards preparing an immediate response.

Another issue that arose was that the dearth of historical market data often makes the use of these tools difficult and suggests the need for ongoing data collection in those countries where emergencies are recurring.

Roundtable participants highlighted the issue of organizational capacity specific to conducting assessments and analyzing results. It was expressed that an initial, basic cash feasibility assessment could be conducted by existing implementing agency staff and completed within one day. Such an assessment would involve talking to market vendors to evaluate the supply chain, transportation blockage (i.e., infrastructure) and/or access to credit. The point was also made that asking the right question(s) was key to eliciting a useful response. Participants emphasized that a distinction should be made between the gathering of data on the ground and the analysis of the data towards taking action. The same person may or may not be best suited to take on both roles. Ultimately, participants understood that in most instances, some information is better than no information; and donors and implementing organizations might have to accept the tradeoff between speed, accuracy, and use of existing data.

This is where the importance of coordination and collaboration among implementing agencies and flexibility on the part of donors come into play. Implementing organizations often discuss the importance of coordination and collaboration, but they don't always follow through with their good intentions, especially during a food security emergency. Data sharing among implementing organizations, particularly in the context of market assessments, would go a long way towards avoiding the duplication of services and preventing service-area overlap. Implementing agencies should also reach out to the private sector, who could play an important role in providing valuable market information and designing or adapting existing tools and technologies in response to needs.

Flexibility on the part of the donor community would also be helpful. Recognizing that conducting a market assessment at the beginning of an emergency will rarely yield a pinpoint accurate assessment, donors should be prepared to grant implementing organizations the flexibility to adjust their proposed implementation strategy in line with the changing food security and market situation. This could involve built-in contingency funding as a part of an existing award or an expedited approval process that would allow implementing agencies to respond more quickly to changes on the ground by quickly switching between implementation modalities. It could also involve allowing implementing organizations to build in scenario-based responses (e.g., if this should happen, then our response will change accordingly) to their applications.

In terms of program design, the key considerations discussed under Discussion Topic #2 specific to structuring cash transfer programs remain relevant here. In addition, the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) has developed a training module that includes a modality comparison matrix that can be used to compare the various modalities for a given context. This could be useful to implementing agencies in determining if a particular modality is feasible and applicable.

After evaluating the available analysis, the context of the food security emergency, as well as the mandate and core programmatic objectives of the donor and implementing agency, it is also crucial that one consider the capacity of the implementing agency specific to cash transfer programming. Skills and experience around cash programming are still somewhat limited, which places limitations on the informed decision making and implementation of cash transfer programs. This is another area in which CaLP could be consulted.

Coordination, collaboration and complementarity are essential to any scale-up attempt, regardless of the modality. Several participants raised the concern about the Cluster system, specifically the ongoing confusion regarding where cash transfer programming fits into it. Coordination, collaboration and complementarity among humanitarian assistance actors are crucial to reaching additional beneficiaries and reducing the risk of unnecessary and resource-draining duplication. They also help to harmonize modalities, values, monitoring and other aspects of successful programming. International standards, like SPHERE, can also be useful in helping organizations work together towards reaching scale. Additional elements to consider include the pre-registration of vulnerable populations, yearly market assessments in emergency prone areas, the pre-printing and pre-positioning of counterfeit-proof vouchers, and the establishment of agreements with the host government, traders, vendors, banks, etc.

Recommendations: The following recommendations came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #3:

- *Donors* –
 - Allow EFSP grants to have a contingency fund, tied to a certain percentage of the overall award, that could be used by the awardee should the circumstances surrounding an emergency food security situation change dramatically;
 - Fund baseline assessments of vulnerable populations in disaster prone countries in order to share information with potential partners and facilitate a more expedient response;
 - Grant EFSP awardees the flexibility to switch between interventions (e.g. cash transfer to vouchers or local procurement) based on the evolving situation, without having to re-submit additional documentation for review, analysis, and approval;
 - Enhance existing food security information systems, such as USAID’s Famine and Early Warning System (FEWS NET), for use in cash transfer programming;
 - Promote greater integration of different response options.

- *Implementing Organizations* –
 - Employ the appropriate staff in the development of cash transfer programming, recognizing that staff skills may vary between traditional food aid and cash transfer programming;

- Preposition voucher and disaster response materials and establish agreements with host governments, traders, vendors, banks, etc.

Good Practices: The following good practices came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #3:

- *Donors* –
 - Use pre-existing, baseline analysis, assessments, and resources in the evaluation of requests for funding assistance.
- *Implementing Organizations* –
 - Use pre-existing, baseline analysis, assessments, and resources;
 - Commit to at least initial assessments as soon as possible;
 - Embrace technologies related to transfer mechanisms.

Research and Evaluation: The following research and evaluation suggestions came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #3:

- *Donors* –
 - Fund evidence-based studies to determine the best scale-up strategies, including the use of safety-nets in emergency situations.
- *Implementing Organizations* –
 - Differentiate between consolidation of existing information toward conducting assessments and analysis, and the need for additional research.

Responding to Emergency Food Insecurity through Cash Transfer and Food Voucher Interventions

Discussion Topic # 4: *What aspects of gender and the role of women should be considered in the development of cash transfer and food voucher interventions?*

The Topic: Equal rights and opportunities for women and men is a fundamental principle of all emergency and development programs. Not only should implementing organizations seek equal rights and opportunities from a pure fairness point of view, but also numerous studies have shown that the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions increase when proper attention is given to gender relations. When cash or vouchers are used to improve food security it is critical to understand the role of men and women in decisions related to household expenditures and food behavior. While the general perception in the development and emergency community ‘give a woman a dollar and she will feed the family’ might reflect the reality in many cases, the role between men and women is socially determined and is highly dynamic and thus context specific. It might therefore very well be that women will be the ones directly feeding the family but men will be the ones going to the market to purchase food. Hence, it is critical to recognize that for proper design and implementation each situation requires a minimum level of knowledge of gender roles within the communities targeted for cash or voucher interventions.

In line with USAID and FFP’s overall policy, EFSP’s Annual Program Statement (APS) calls for gender integration¹ in all projects and programs. At a minimum, applications for funding must show how the role and status of men and women will affect the intervention and how the roles of men and women will affect the projects and programs. To fulfill these requirements, emergency food security proposals must at least consider the roles of women and men in decision-making related to household expenses and food security. Emergency food security funding must ensure that projects and programs build effectively and efficiently on women and men’s roles with respect to household food security and that the interventions will not have any negative repercussions on the roles and status of women and men in the given communities.

Discussion Summary: Ms. Lynn Brown from WFP introduced the topic. Ms. Brown stressed the importance of going beyond looking simply at the households as the basic decision-making unit. Rather, for the impact on food security it matters who in the household will receive the cash or voucher. General research on gender has shown that women tend to spend money on items more directly related to household food security and children’s welfare than men. This research has influenced the design of a number of cash and voucher interventions, particularly for conditional assistance focusing on areas considered women’s domain, such as children’s health and education. Ms. Brown cited examples from Asia and Africa where gender roles would have a decisive role on the effectiveness of conditional cash transfer programs, for example situations where women

¹ Amendment No. 03 - USAID/DCHA/FFP Annual Program Statement (APS) No. FFP-FY-10-001, Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP)

cannot take their children to health clinics without their husbands. This may mean that the husband would need to take one day off as a day laborer with critical impacts on the household food security. Gender roles might also determine the food security impact of cash vs. food. In Bangladesh, distributions of atta (a fortified wheat) had positive impacts on women's nutritional status while cash and rice had none. Atta is considered more unattractive than rice to men, so when it is provided women are able to eat more. Finally, Ms. Brown stressed that transfers to women typically empower them within the household, as it gives them greater bargaining power. In some cases, though, giving cash instead of food to women might result in greater violence. For example, in cultures where women do not traditionally have a voice in household finances, providing them with income can often shift the gender dynamics within the household leading, in some cases, to domestic violence.

The CaLP presented key findings from a recently finished study on gender issues in cash transfer programs. Concern Worldwide and Oxfam GB carried out the study and assessed the impact of emergency cash transfers on gender relations within households and communities. Based on recent crises in Indonesia, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, the study covered both rural and urban areas. The recipients were mostly women who received the cash either in envelopes or through mobile phones. The study confirmed that receiving cash can be empowering for women and give them greater bargaining power over household expenditures. Overall, women rarely took decisions on the use of cash by themselves, except within female-headed households. According to the study, cash could increase peace and harmony within households, with men facing less pressure to provide cash income. However, instead of being based on specific knowledge about gender roles in the targeted communities, implementing partners often built cash transfer programs on untested assumptions about women and men. The programs thus tended to reinforce gender stereotypes, instead of being used as an opportunity to transform gender relations. Moreover, there was not consistently collected sex-disaggregated data that would allow better understanding of the gender impact of cash.

The ensuing discussion confirmed that often reality does not reflect general perceptions about the role and behavior of men and women. For example, men do not necessarily use cash primarily for their own benefits and women are not always the best advocates for empowering other women. Gender continues to be an issue where we still struggle to identify the best means to ensure gender-sensitive programming. Based on USAID's experience and research conducted by FFP's current gender working group through TOPS², sex-disaggregated data are not sufficient and there is a need for more information about the role of gender in program implementation and outcome. We still tend to 'reduce' gender considerations to women alone and thereby risking marginalizing men by not understanding that women and men have complementary roles in food security decision-making within households and communities. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of gender within communities is often particularly strong during crises, calling for gender monitoring throughout implementation of cash transfer programs. Reflecting on the dynamic nature of gender, some participants warned against unnecessarily rigid

² Technical and Operational Performance Support Program for Food for Peace Grantees

approaches in program design, which could limit constructive dialogues with communities and any necessary adjustments.

Participants emphasized that emergency cash transfer programs should not be evaluated for their gender transformative role. Rather, in designing and implementing cash transfer programs organizations should ensure that the interventions will not negatively impact gender relations. It will thus be necessary to integrate knowledge on gender relations into program design and implementation.

This does not mean that all new emergency cash initiatives will have to prepare thorough gender analyses at baseline. There are existing resources that can be tapped into, including specific gender studies for the targeted areas and local resource persons. Emergency programs do not necessarily need to be perfect from the start but should include plans on how implementing organization will address gender in monitoring and how adjustments will be made.

Finally, participants noted that cash transfer programs are flexible, offering a range of delivery mechanisms that can be tailored to address women's and men's special concerns, including the use of mobile phones to allow distribution in smaller quantities, which can be necessary to allow women to use the cash directly. However, local conditions might prevent women from having an ID, which would then call for special delivery mechanisms.

Recommendations: The following recommendations came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #4:

- *Donors* –
 - Adapt a flexible and dynamic approach to gender integration in emergency cash transfer programs, ensuring that design will build on a minimum knowledge of gender relations in the targeted areas and that adjustments will be made during implementation as greater understanding of gender impacts emerges;
 - Include gender considerations in funding decision tree;
 - Strengthen integration of sex-disaggregated data in existing information systems on food security.

- *Implementing Organizations* –
 - Make greater use of the existing knowledge base on gender relations in the targeted area for design and implementation of cash transfer initiatives, and ensure that monitoring and evaluation will provide sex-disaggregated information, to be used for adjustments during implementation.

Good Practices: The following good practices came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #4:

- *Donors* –
 - Use pre-existing, baseline analysis, assessments, and resources on gender relations in the evaluation of requests for funding assistance.

- *Implementing Organizations* –
 - Design delivery mechanisms based on gender assessments;
 - For emergency cash transfers, focus on ‘do no harm’ and gender sensitivity rather than gender transformation;
 - Use a gender lens when defining expected outcomes.

Research and Evaluation: The following research and evaluation suggestions came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #4:

- *Donors and Implementing Organizations* –
 - Continue improving means for assessing gender impact of cash transfers;
 - Define the critical indicators on gender sensitivity for cash transfer programs.

Responding to Emergency Food Insecurity through Cash Transfer and Food Voucher Interventions

Discussion Topic # 5: *What are the linkages between emergency cash transfer and food voucher interventions and longer-term development?*

The Topic: As highlighted by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), cash grants can have positive benefits on the development of local communities where the food is purchased. Similarly, experience from emergency cash interventions in response to the Kenya post-election violence in 2008³ demonstrated that cash transfer projects offered greater potential than in-kind projects for preparing households for the transition from recovery to longer-term development. On the other hand, experts have raised concerns about potentially negative market impacts since the introduction of cash transfers as a delivery mechanism to respond to food insecurity. Such negative impacts could have longer-term consequences, so most cash transfer interventions will include market monitoring. The impact does not need to be direct as shown in a recent USAID funded project in Niger, where the real-time evaluation showed signs of a village chief influencing how the beneficiaries would use food vouchers. The evaluation warns that this influence could lead to future market monopolization⁴.

Another concern related to the linkages between emergency cash transfers and longer term development are related to the capacity of local and national stakeholders to have the skills set required for coordination, targeting, and monitoring of emergency cash transfers in the future. Some emergency cash transfer interventions include capacity development components but will seldom specify against what the capacity development output should be measured.

The linkages between emergency cash transfer / food voucher interventions and longer-term development will have to be expressed in the exit strategies of the emergency interventions. Several studies⁵ of emergency cash transfers, for instance, have highlighted the importance of linking emergency cash transfers to social protection schemes to ensure sustainability. Likewise cash transfers for emergencies should be a component of social protection to ensure the capacity for quick responses.

Finally, it should be noted that EFSP encourages applicants to highlight any positive development benefits that the suggested intervention might have.

³ Nicholson, N. (2009) "Lessons Learned from the Post Election Violence Early Recovery Programme in Kenya 2008 - 2009" Save the Children UK, Nairobi

⁴ Dolphin, H. et al. (2010) "Real Time Evaluation - Project ADVANCE Niger" Catholic Relief Services, Niamey
(ADVANCE: Assistance through the Distribution of Vouchers Aiding Nigerien Communities in Emergency)

⁵ See for instance, Jaspar, S. et al. (2007) "A Review of UNICEF's Role in Cash Transfers to Emergency Affected Populations", EMOPS. UNICEF, New York

Discussion Summary: Ms. Emmy Simmons of the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa introduced the topic. Ms. Simmons highlighted that in spite of shared social and economic contexts, such as market performance and the dynamics of poverty, emergency cash transfers are more often than not separated from longer-term development interventions. The division is institutional and linked to different mindsets and intervention approaches. There is a need to ensure a greater convergence between the two, particularly mobilizing country leadership for emergency interventions towards understanding the key drivers of emergency food security needs. Ms. Simmons also stressed the complementarity between emergency cash transfers and development assistance. Finally, Ms. Simmons underscored that the Rome principles⁶ call for strategic coordination of food security interventions and a twin-track approach to food security to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable, and ensure medium- and long-term sustainable development to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty.

Members of FFP's EFSP team stressed that EFSP resources must focus on emergency response programs and not government or interventions that are primarily developmental in nature, as a matter of legislative authority. The roundtable highlighted, however, that emergency response can have developmental impacts. In order to maximize such impacts, it will be necessary to strategically plan the relationship between the emergency response and specific development outcomes, while keeping in mind that the immediate objective of EFSP is to save lives.

Participants confirmed that cash has the potential to have a much bigger impact on livelihoods than food aid, as beneficiaries will integrate their longer-term development and recovery needs into their spending patterns. Participants referred to several concrete examples of how emergency voucher programs have been tailored to address longer-term development needs (e.g., vouchers for dairy products with an impact on the value chain). On the other hand, some participants expressed concerns regarding current experience with linking emergency cash transfers to social safety nets. In Ethiopia, for instance, the Productive Safety Nets Program (PSNP) has shown little success in responding to emergency food insecurity. A critical component seems to be targeting, and the capacity to adapt targeting for emergency needs, which will be different from targeting for general social protection. This links back to the need for adequate early warning systems and baselines on livelihoods and market systems, to ensure an emergency intervention is designed properly.

The roundtable highlighted the importance of integrating capacity for swift responses to emergencies in longer-term development strategies, in line with integrated disaster risk management. This is particularly important for seasonal recurrent emergencies. The capacity for swift emergency cash transfer responses, including scale-ups, will rely on the capacity of the information systems on food security. This will also require institutional capacity development and greater use of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

⁶ The Five Rome Principles were adopted by The World Summit on Food Security in Rome in November 2009.

Recent experience from Haiti shows vouchers and cash might have different immediate and longer-term impacts. A market study six months after the January 2010 earthquake⁷ showed poor households' preferences for cheaper, lower-quality imported food. While cash transfers would improve food security in the near term, it might negatively affect domestic production and thus increase risks of food insecurity in the longer term. Moreover, the study showed that import of food is concentrated among very few market players who can have a negative impact on free market prices in the future. Compared to cash, vouchers might thus provide a greater possibility for the providing organizations to influence purchase of locally produced food with a potential more positive future impact on both markets and food production than cash. Some participants therefore found that vouchers could be a better option to meet both acute needs and longer-term development goals compared to cash.

Finally, it was noted that not all implementing partners have the dual capacity to address both emergencies and longer-term development. However, there are ample experienced organizations with this capacity that could be engaged in complementary partnerships.

Recommendations: The following recommendations came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #5:

- *Donors and Implementing Organizations* –
 - Promote partnerships among development and emergency response partners towards ensuring livelihood impacts will be addressed in the context of emergency interventions with a special focus on the principle of “do no harm”;
 - Encourage greater linkages between emergency interventions and longer-term development;
 - Provide more information on the longer-term impact of emergency interventions;
 - Ensure that continuous market assessments are available so that layering of emergency interventions into development situations does not produce counterproductive results (e.g., driving up prices unexpectedly, disincentives to producers, etc.).

Good Practices: The following good practices came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #5:

- *Donors* –
 - Work with host governments in long-term development interventions to ensure that disaster risk management will be integrated;
 - Support local and national capacity building for responding to emergencies.

⁷ Fintrac (2010) “Haiti Market Analysis” USAID Food for Peace, Washington D.C.

- *Implementing Organizations* –
 - Develop social protection schemes that include the capacity for scaling up when an emergency strikes (e.g., school feeding programs in Cambodia and Brazil that will already have logistics in place to increase size of transfers and coverage).

Research and Evaluation: The following research and evaluation suggestions came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #5:

- *Donors and Implementing Organizations* –
 - Study how to develop appropriate exit strategies;
 - Promote longer-term impact evaluations.

Responding to Emergency Food Insecurity through Cash Transfer and Food Voucher Interventions

Discussion Topic # 6: *What are realistic indicators of cash transfer/voucher programs?*

The Topic: This topic addresses the need to be able to measure the degree to which cash transfer and/or food voucher programs are successfully achieving their objectives. While they share some measurement issues in common with in-kind food programs, cash and food voucher programs have some unique measurement considerations. With cash programs, for example, there are likely to be more benefits from non-food expenditures that must be recognized.

We also have a need to assess relative benefits between cash and food voucher programs and in-kind programs. And from the perspective of FFP, we need to specifically establish how cash and food voucher programs affect food access and food security. To these ends, there is a need to establish which indicators would be most appropriate for gauging the success of cash and food voucher programs, and to encourage better harmonization of indicators used by our implementing partners.

Discussion Summary: Mr. Paul Macek from World Vision introduced the topic. Among other things, Mr. Macek discussed the need to keep indicators simple and limited to information needed for decision-making purposes. He also highlighted the need for greater emphasis on market-related indicators, as well as indicators that help test assumptions about the relative cost-effectiveness and timeliness of cash and food vouchers vs. in-kind food aid distributions. Mr. Macek suggested that NGOs should link up with academic institutions in developing evaluation frameworks, citing the current example of World Vision and other NGO partners' collaboration with Cornell University.

The ensuing roundtable discussion raised a number of key ideas, including attribution issues, program constraints, and expenditure patterns vs. program cash use.

Roundtable participants discussed the problem of attribution. Specifically, how can donors and implementing organizations link their humanitarian assistance interventions using cash and food vouchers with such measurable impact indicators as morbidity, mortality or malnutrition? Also, how should one account for exogenous factors that may affect impact outcomes such as rainfall, disease outbreaks, new government policies, other donor activities, etc...? One approach could be to understand the "impact pathways", whereby outputs translate into impacts. This would allow for measurement of more directly-attributable output measures with confidence that these outputs have a positive effect on the ultimate desired impacts.

In addition, the ability to measure program success is hindered by the short timelines of emergency activities and the limited capacity/resources of implementing partners. The short timelines make it very difficult to collect baseline data (unless previously existing), as well as capture longer-term impacts that may not be apparent until after program

activities have completed. This could be addressed by strengthening food security and livelihood information systems in countries that frequently face emergency food insecurity situations.

Finally, participants pointed out that it is important not to judge the impacts of cash transfers only by the beneficiaries' use of the cash itself. Instead, it is better to look at changes in overall expenditure patterns, as cash is fungible. For example, if cash transfers intended to increase food access get spent on non-food expenditures (e.g., school fees, health costs, shelter, debts), it could free up other household income to be spent on food at other times. The question arose of whether it was important for donors to focus on if their dollar was used to purchase food or other items, or if it was more important to determine if households made better food security decisions because of the additional income, regardless of which dollar was spent on what.

Recommendations: The following recommendations came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #6:

- *Donors and Implementing Organizations* –
 - Develop and use a set of harmonized indicators for measuring success in achieving various program objectives that are clearly measurable and attributable to program activities within the program's timeframe;
 - Strengthen the capacity of implementing partners to carry out M&E activities through both direct resources, and development of national food security information systems in countries with recurring, or high susceptibility to, food emergencies.

Good Practices: The following good practices came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #6:

- *Implementing Organizations* –
 - Partner with academic institutions and other agencies to develop and implement evaluation frameworks;
 - Recognize attribution problems in results reporting and find ways to link direct results of program activities with desired ultimate impacts.

Research and Evaluation: The following research and evaluation suggestions came out of the roundtable in response to Discussion Topic #6:

- *Donors and Implementing Organizations* –
 - Support research to test conventional assumptions regarding benefits of cash/voucher programs (e.g., regarding timeliness, cost-effectiveness, benefits for market development, commodity quality, etc.);

- Research “impact pathways” that can link output indicators with ultimate impacts;
- Study best methods for carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities for cash and food voucher activities;
- Study how to conduct impact evaluations for cash/voucher programming.

Bios of the Roundtable Participants *(in alphabetical order)*

- **Nicolas Barrouillet, Cash and Learning Partnership Coordinator**

Nicolas Barrouillet is the coordinator for the Cash and Learning Partnership (CaLP), which is an interagency partnership that promotes the appropriate use of cash transfers in emergencies through capacity building, evidence-based research and advocating for and engaging in the development of policy around cash based programming. Nicolas has more than 10 years of international coordination experience in the field of humanitarian and emergency relief. He has worked at both at the HQ and field levels for organizations such as ICRC, MSF and IOM, which he represented in a wide variety of contexts (DRC, Pakistan, Mali, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Guinea). Nicolas holds a Master's degree (LL.M) in International and European Law, with a specialization in International Humanitarian Law. Before taking up this position, Nicolas was focusing on refugee and asylum cases in the UK –an area that he remains interested in.

- **John Brooks, USAID/Office of Food for Peace (FFP)-Emergency Food Security Program**

John Brooks is the Team Leader for FFP's Emergency Food Security Program. John joined USAID in 2001, where he began as a Project Budget Analyst in the U.S. Mission to the UN Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome, Italy. He returned to Washington, DC, in 2006 and has served as both a Policy Analyst and Operations Specialist for FFP's Title II program.

- **Lynn Brown, UN World Food Program**

Lynn Brown is currently Acting Chief of the Food Security and Safety Nets Service at WFP, having joined in May 2010. Prior to this Lynn worked for 12 years in the Agriculture and Rural Development department of the World Bank. She specializes in food security, across all its pillars – availability/agriculture production/supply, access/poverty/safety nets and utilization/nutritional security – as well as gender. From 2008 until 2010 she was based in Bangladesh where she managed the World Bank's nutrition portfolio.

Lynn undertook Ph.D. graduate studies at Cornell University and holds an M.Sc. in quantitative development economics from the University of Warwick, England. She is an author of numerous research papers, book chapters, and co-editor of a book on gender and structural adjustment.

- **Pat Diskin, USAID-Pretoria**

Pat Diskin is an agricultural economist who has worked on USAID-funded food security activities for the past 20 years. He has been a Food for Peace Officer in Africa for the past 13 years. He currently covers FFP programs in Southern Africa based at the USAID

Mission in South Africa. The focus of much of his work has been on food markets and the interactions between markets and food aid programming.

- **Paul Macek, World Vision**

Paul Macek is Senior Director of the Integrated Food and Nutrition Team at World Vision US (WVUS), which oversees WVUS' annual portfolio of nearly \$160 million in food security programs across the globe. These programs involve a diverse group of food security interventions, ranging from school feeding, nutrition, and food fortification to agriculture and economic development and humanitarian assistance. Prior to joining WV, Paul worked with Catholic Relief Services where he served for 14 years in Benin, Uganda, Zambia, and Southern Africa. Paul has administered programs in the areas of public health, HIV/AIDS, orphans and vulnerable children, sustainable livelihoods, food security, peacebuilding, and emergency response. Paul received his BA in History and Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, and holds MA in International Affairs, with an emphasis on political economy and development studies from American University (Washington, DC).

- **Megan McGlinchy, Catholic Relief Services**

Megan McGlinchy is CRS' Markets and Urban Food Security Advisor. She possesses a technical background in agricultural economics and market assessments and has done work on voucher and cash programs in both urban and rural settings. Ms. McGlinchy designed an intervention for CRS on the Haiti-Dominican Republic border for voucher programs in the border towns in the wake of the earthquake, and has been engaged with CRS' Jerusalem West Bank Gaza program as well as others across Africa. Ms. McGlinchy has worked closely with Cornell University to field test the Market Information and Food Insecurity Response Analysis (MIFIRA) Framework in Kenya and helped to develop a market monitoring system for local and regional procurement projects and cash/voucher interventions.

- **Laura Meissner, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance**

Laura Meissner is the Economic Recovery & Market Systems Advisor at USAID's Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), where she provides technical guidance and leadership of OFDA's economic and livelihoods programs and capacity building of the economic recovery sector. Prior to joining OFDA, Laura was Senior Program Manager at the SEEP Network, an international association of economic development NGOs, where she managed initiatives on economic recovery in crisis-affected environments, youth-inclusive financial services, microenterprise support for HIV-affected clients, and rural finance and food security. Ms. Meissner has experience in over 15 countries, and holds a B.S. from Georgetown University and a M.A. in international development from American University.

- **Silke Pietzsch, Senior Food Security and Livelihood Advisor, Action Against Hunger (ACF)**

Senior Food Security and Livelihoods Advisor Silke Pietzsch has focused her career on the field of food security and livelihoods, as well as nutrition, serving in a variety of roles over the course of her career.

Silke has worked with ICRSAT on crop research, GTZ in Asia on improved seed varieties, as well as ACF – UK to open their missions in Malawi and Zimbabwe and facilitate the first exploratory mission in Swaziland/Lesotho.

She then joined MSF-NL to explore nutrition programming in Ethiopia. In 2004 she re-joined the food security and livelihoods team of Oxfam GB as humanitarian support personnel, covering flood emergencies in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, the Tsunami response in India and Andaman, the droughts and resulting food crises in Niger and Mali, and chronic crises in East Africa. After a period in Oxford headquarters for OGB, she rejoined Action Against Hunger in 2006 in Niger, where she was Food Security and Livelihoods Coordinator. Silke holds a Master of Food Science and Household Economy from the University of Kiel, and a Master of Public Health from the University of Maastricht. She speaks English, French, German, and has notions of Nepali and Dutch.

- **Lene Poulsen, International Consultant**

Lene Poulsen is an agricultural economist with a long track record in food security, early warning systems and livelihood improvements. Lene is an accomplished evaluator of humanitarian and development policies, programs and projects in more than 60 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, focusing on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD). She has particular knowledge of gender equality and strengthening the role of women. She works with several UN agencies including UNDP and FAO, as well as NGOs, the EC, bilateral government agencies and research institutions.

- **Emmy Simmons, Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa**

Emmy Simmons is currently an independent consultant on international development issues, with a focus on food, agriculture, and Africa. She serves on the boards of several organizations engaged in international agriculture and global development more broadly: the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and the Washington chapter of the Society for International Development (SID). She completed a career of nearly 30 years with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2005, having served since 2002 as the Assistant Administrator for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, a Presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed position. Prior to joining USAID, she worked in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs in Monrovia, Liberia and taught and conducted research at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria. She began her international career as a Peace Corps

volunteer in the Philippines from 1962-64. She holds an M.S. degree in agricultural economics from Cornell University and a B.A. degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

- **Nicholas Weatherill, Policy Coordinator—DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid**

Nick Weatherill is currently Policy Coordinator for Humanitarian Food Assistance in DG ECHO, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department. He led the development of the EU Policy on Humanitarian Food Assistance, which was adopted in March 2010, and is now coordinating the policy's roll-out and implementation. He also advises in support of technical food assistance operations in Sudan, Haiti and Latin America, and has a strong operational background. He previously worked as a Humanitarian Advisor for Africa to the UK's Department for International Development, as a field coordinator for DG ECHO in Tanzania and Ethiopia, and as an Emergency Coordinator for the NGO MERLIN. He has an academic background in Social Policy and Planning in Developing Countries, with a specialization in Rural Development and Health Policy.

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