



USAID
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December 2012

Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis

USAID POLICY AND PROGRAM GUIDANCE



Cover photo credits: (clockwise from top) Morgana Wingard; Neil Thomas/USAID; Siaka Millogo

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Letter from the Administrator

I am pleased to present USAID's first-ever policy and program guidance on building resilience to recurrent crisis. Drawn from decades of experience providing humanitarian relief and development assistance, this guidance aims to reduce chronic vulnerability and promote more inclusive growth in areas of recurrent crisis. Ultimately, we seek to save and improve lives and decrease the need for repeated infusions of humanitarian assistance in these areas.

The importance and urgency of this work has been made clear over the past year. In 2011, the worst drought in 60 years plunged 13.3 million people into crisis in the Horn of Africa. Only a few months later, another crisis emerged in the Sahel, where millions of people have suffered from the devastating impacts of drought, conflict, and other pressures. The widespread need seen in these two regions reflects similar difficulties facing communities across the globe; in far too many places, families often rely on humanitarian assistance, year after year, just to survive.

In response to these emergencies, the international community provides significant levels of lifesaving relief, largely concentrated in just a few countries. Over the last decade, approximately US \$90 billion was spent by international donors in just nine countries, accounting for almost 50 percent of all humanitarian assistance during this period. During the same time, three-quarters of USAID humanitarian assistance was spent in just 10 countries. Global trend lines and projections show clear and continuing growth in humanitarian need in certain regions, and climate change threatens to exacerbate both the frequency and severity of extreme weather events and undercut important development gains.

We can do better. That's why USAID is working with committed and accountable governments and international partners to build resilient societies even while saving lives in times of crisis. While we cannot stop shocks from happening, we must increase our focus on helping people and their societies withstand and recover from them. In the Horn of Africa, for example, we have set a goal to directly benefit 10 million people and reduce the region's emergency caseload by 1 million people within 5 years. We expect to define and realize similarly transformative impact in other areas where we apply this policy and program guidance. To do so, we are committed to identifying how to measure a broader range of results, with stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for resilience.

In order to reach these goals, we must strengthen the way we work as an agency. Too often, our humanitarian and development teams operate in separate geographic locations, on separate problems, with separate goals. To effectively build resilience we must unite our approaches. While this is not an easy commitment, it is an important one, and we have begun to make progress. Over the past year in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, for example, we have created integrated agency units – called Joint Planning Cells – that are working to comprehensively address both humanitarian and development needs in close coordination with country governments and international partners. The effort of these teams demonstrates the powerful effect that we can have when we operate as a united Agency toward a singular goal. Leadership at all levels, in the field and in Washington, is committed to facilitating and supporting the innovations necessary in our programming and operations to achieve our goals.

We undertake these efforts because we believe they will strengthen our ability to save and improve lives. No one should have to face the crippling circumstances we have seen in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel over the past year. Through building resilience, we can help prevent that desperation, save lives, and create the conditions where families and communities can prosper.



Dr. Rajiv J. Shah
USAID Administrator
December 2012

Executive Summary

While we cannot stop shocks from happening, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) can – and must – do more to help people withstand them. USAID has been in the vanguard of international momentum to support country and regional plans and build resilience to recurrent crisis. Through this policy and program guidance, we will leverage the broad range of our institutional capabilities to implement innovative programmatic approaches to promote resilience. Through these efforts, we will draw on our mandates to provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance and longer-term development assistance¹ (including our Development Assistance, Global Health, and Economic Support Funds accounts).

What Is Resilience?

For USAID, resilience is the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

KEY COMPONENTS OF RESILIENCE

While the concept of resilience has broad applicability to many of the environments in which our Agency works, this guidance is specifically focused on areas where chronic poverty inter-

sects with shocks and stresses to produce recurrent crises and undermine development gains. In these places, we must increase adaptive capacity – the ability to respond quickly and effectively to new circumstances – and improve the ability to address and reduce risk.

We will emphasize approaches that empower women and more effectively reduce gaps between males and females. Functioning institutions of good governance and democratic accountability are also essential; building resilient countries and systems requires effective and inclusive governments that hold themselves accountable for results. Working closely with other U.S. Government agencies, international donors, multilateral organizations, and other partners, we will elevate and support inclusive country-led plans that lead to sustainable reductions in vulnerability and promote inclusive growth.

AN AGENDA FOR OPERATIONAL CHANGE

Our success in achieving these goals requires that we establish resilience to recurrent crisis as a common objective across our development and humanitarian programs. While we will maintain both the lifesaving speed of humanitarian assistance and the longer-term focus of development assistance, we will also identify opportunities to *layer*, *integrate*, and *sequence* these core capabilities to achieve results.

THE RESULTS WE SEEK

Our efforts to build resilience will contribute to a sustainable reduction in vulnerability and more inclusive growth. In this pursuit and in the areas where we apply this policy and program guidance, we intend that our efforts will result in:

- increased adaptive capacity
- improved ability to address and reduce risk
- improved social and economic conditions of vulnerable populations

Over the long-term, we envision that these results will collectively contribute to reduced humanitarian need, and metrics will be developed to capture these results.

Ultimately, we seek to save and improve lives. In the Horn of Africa, for example, we aim to benefit directly 10 million people and reduce the region's emergency caseload by 1 million people within 5 years. We are defining a comparable expectation for impact in the Sahel, based on local conditions, and will likewise develop metrics for impact in other focus countries and regions moving forward.

¹ For the purposes of this guidance, the term “development assistance” refers to funding in our Development Assistance, Global Health, and Economic Support Funds accounts.

In particular, our:

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE will seek more opportunities to reduce vulnerability and lay the foundation for longer-term development while continuing its primary focus on saving lives, and our

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE will undertake longer-term programming in chronically vulnerable communities and be sufficiently flexible in higher-risk areas to build resilience and facilitate inclusive growth.

Under this guidance, USAID is institutionalizing change by ensuring that integrated teams of humanitarian relief and development experts work together to better understand each other's strengths and constraints and undertake:

1. Joint Problem Analysis and Objective Setting so teams have a common understanding of the underlying causes of recurrent crisis.

2. Intensified, Coordinated Strategic Planning around Resilience to ensure that we anticipate risks, vulnerabilities, and probable humanitarian need when deciding on development strategies.

3. Mutually Informed Project Designs and Procurements to enable the layering, integrating, and sequencing of humanitarian and development assistance.

4. Robust Learning so we can develop the appropriate indicators, make midcourse corrections, and share lessons learned across the Agency and with external partners.

These efforts will be supported by leadership action to address barriers to organizational change. At the heart of this document is our commitment to empower solution-holders close to the problem; leadership at every level will remain committed to addressing unnecessary roadblocks that stand in the way of meeting our objectives.

Introduction

In September 2011, at the Nairobi Summit on the Horn of Africa Crisis, African leaders called for a new approach to addressing recurrent crisis in the region. Based on the widespread recognition that current trends and past experience dictated a new approach, the Joint Declaration from this summit called on development partners to “walk” and “work” with African leaders to support long-term programs and strategies to build resilience. They specifically called on the international community to support reform of the emergency humanitarian response and development assistance systems to enhance resilience and promote long-term solutions,² recognizing the way they work together will have significant impact on the results we are able to achieve.

This call emphasizes growing international recognition that, as a community and as individual donors, we must build upon

previous efforts to strategically coordinate our humanitarian response and longer-term development assistance³ in a way that elevates country- and regional-led plans and catalyzes sustainable, transformational change. Reducing chronic vulnerability and building resilience require interdependent and multisectoral approaches that combine strong technical solutions with new operational approaches. It also requires that we work in close coordination with a wide range of partners; the spotlight on international partnerships below describes the Global Alliance for Action for Drought Resilience and Growth in the Horn of Africa and the Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel (AGIR-Sahel), which play important coordination roles in these regions.

We will continue to deliver lifesaving humanitarian assistance where crises occur. But we will also focus on doing better. As a global community and as partners in the recovery of com-

We must strategically coordinate humanitarian and development assistance in a way that catalyzes sustainable, transformational change.

Spotlight on International Partnerships: The Global Alliance for Action for Drought Resilience and Growth

The Global Alliance committed development partners to better coordinate, harmonize, and align their programs and policies to enhance resilience against chronic drought and promote economic growth in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

Active Work Streams:

Support for the development of common country and regional programming frameworks, regional capacity building and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

USAID’s Role:

Assist regional organizations and governments to reduce chronic vulnerability to drought emergencies and enhance resilience, especially in dryland areas.

Important Dates

April 2012	USAID, together with African and international development partners, co-hosted a Joint Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Ministerial and High Level Development Partners Meeting on drought resilience in Nairobi that established a new Global Alliance for Action for Drought Resilience and Growth in the Horn of Africa. The Global Alliance is supporting the completion of technically rigorous Country Program Frameworks that will enable donors, including USAID, to closely align programs and funding with plans developed and owned by governments of drought-affected areas.
June 2012	USAID convened the first meeting of the Global Alliance in Geneva.
July 2012	Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel, AGIR-Sahel, was established under the leadership of the European Union and will work closely with the Global Alliance for Action for Drought Resilience and Growth in the Horn of Africa. It proposes a roadmap for better coordination of humanitarian and development efforts in the Sahel region. USAID will be focusing on helping to build the resilience of households, communities, and systems in the most vulnerable agropastoral and marginal ecological zones.

² East African Community, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, and the Republic of South Sudan. “Ending Drought Emergencies: A Commitment to Sustainable Solutions” http://www.statehousekenya.go.ke/speeches/kibaki/sept2011/NBI_DECLARATION_2011090902.pdf

³ For the purposes of this guidance, the term “development assistance” refers to funding in our Development Assistance, Global Health, and Economic Support Funds accounts.

By layering, integrating, and sequencing humanitarian and development assistance, we can further the objectives of each to a greater extent than by programming in isolation.

munities suffering from recurrent crisis, we cannot be satisfied by continual cycles of suffering from one humanitarian crisis to the next. While we cannot stop shocks from occurring, we can do much more to help people withstand and recover from them, creating a platform for their continued development. By layering, integrating, and sequencing humanitarian and development assistance, we can further the objectives of each to a greater extent than by programming in isolation. Through successfully capitalizing on their individual and shared purposes and strengths, we believe that, over the long term, our efforts can result in reduced humanitarian need where we apply this policy guidance.

This policy and program guidance provides an operational vision for the Agency intended to increase our effectiveness. This guidance will help us draw important lessons from the Horn of

Africa and the Sahel, where heightened international attention and strong leadership have created opportunities to innovate and build resilience. Although the actions required to build resilience are likely to look different in different contexts that face unique shocks and stresses, our experience in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel will provide key insights as we expand our focus to other areas. Identification of additional areas of focus⁴ will be guided by historic patterns of shocks, stresses, and humanitarian need, among other factors. We also intend to issue more detailed operational and program guidance and tools to inform the implementation of this policy. This guidance will inform our work with partners, including those within the U.S. Government, who are indispensable to these efforts. The scope of the problem requires concerted and concentrated action by all stakeholders.

⁴ Beyond the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, this guidance will also be applied to other areas of recurrent crisis based on analysis of a variety of factors (see "Selecting Areas of Focus") and through conversation between USAID/Washington and our field missions.

Framing Resilience

For the purposes of this policy guidance, USAID views resilience in the face of recurrent crisis as:

the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

Shocks and stresses take many forms. Dramatic events such as hurricanes, earthquakes, or tsunamis can have a devastating, immediate impact. Stresses can take less apparent but insidious forms and often have more gradual onsets than shocks, including events such as drought, global economic volatility, or natural resource depletion. In areas of chronic poverty, for example, a simple increase in food prices can trigger significant underlying vulnerability and result in crisis. Conflict can be both a shock as well as an underlying source of stress that can make communities more vulnerable to other shocks when they hit.

The actual impact of any given shock or set of stressors at the community level is largely determined by the magnitude of the hazard itself, combined with the vulnerability to the shock and the capacity of those affected to withstand them. In the most catastrophic case, a shock can completely overwhelm a community to the point of collapse. At a less extreme level, a society may eventually recover, but diminished livelihoods and resources may leave affected populations worse off and more vulnerable than before.



Source: Neil Thomas/USAID

USAID strives to build resilience so that, in the face of stresses and shocks, the communities where we work are prepared and able to take anticipatory action to avoid major losses, and in the event that crisis results, they are able to respond effectively and build back better than before. This continued path of growth – even in the face of potential setbacks – is a critical component of our work.

THE RESULTS WE SEEK

Our approach to resilience requires that we identify ways to **layer, integrate, and sequence** our humanitarian relief and development assistance. We will specifically identify ways for our humanitarian assistance to seek more opportunities to reduce vulnerability and lay the foundation for longer-term development while continuing its primary focus on saving lives and for our development assistance to undertake longer-time programming in chronically vulnerable communities and be sufficiently flexible in higher-risk areas as a means to build resilience and facilitate inclusive growth.

Our efforts to build resilience will contribute to a sustainable reduction in vulnerability and more inclusive growth. In this pursuit and in the areas where we apply this policy and program guidance, we intend that our efforts will result in:

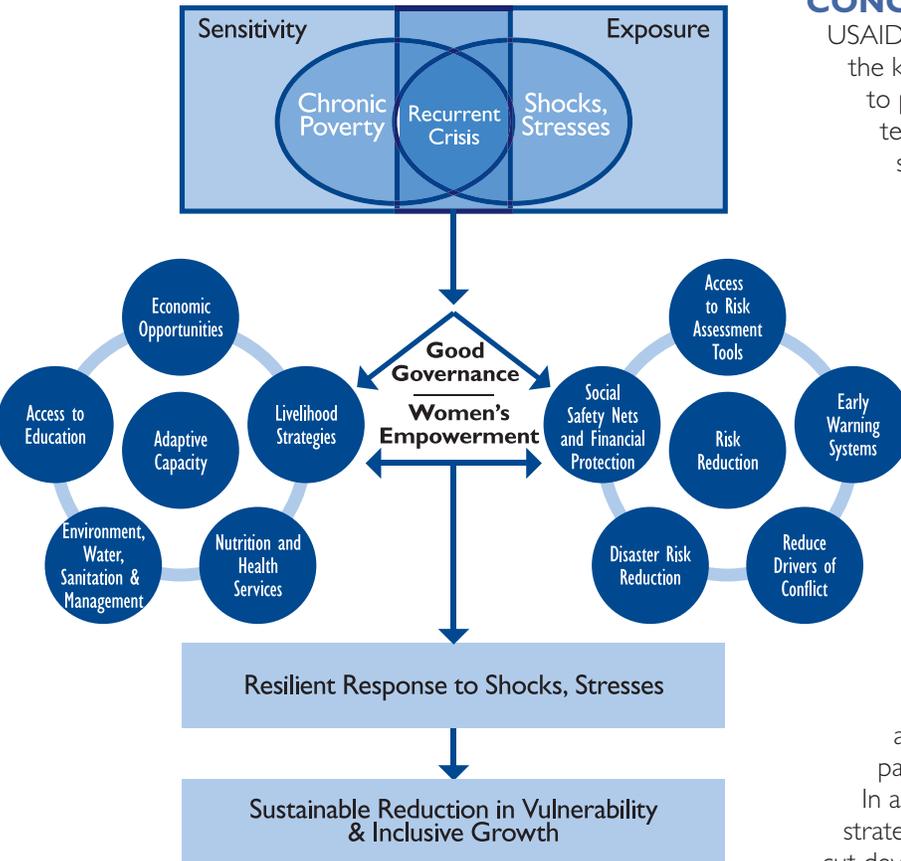
- increased adaptive capacity,
- improved ability to address and reduce risk, and
- improved social and economic conditions of vulnerable populations.

Over the long-term, we envision that these results will collectively contribute to reduced humanitarian need, and metrics will be developed to capture these results.

Ultimately, we seek to save and improve lives. In the Horn of Africa, for example, we aim to benefit directly 10 million people and reduce the region's emergency caseload by one million people within five years. We are working to identify comparable expectation for impact in the Sahel, based on local conditions, and will likewise develop metrics for impact in other focus countries and regions moving forward.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

USAID's conceptual framework for resilience distills the key components of our approach and is intended to provide a broad frame for country and regional teams to consider as they develop context-specific strategies. At its core is the idea that we are likely to find recurrent crisis in places where chronic poverty and exposure to shocks and stresses intersect. We will focus our efforts to build resilience in these areas, where there is often low capacity to manage shocks.



To increase resilience, communities need both adaptive capacity and the ability to address and reduce risk. Adaptive capacity is the ability to quickly and effectively respond to new circumstances. This includes ensuring that social systems, inclusive governance structures, and economic opportunities are in place. While the components of adaptive capacity are numerous and wide-ranging, USAID places a priority on the five displayed in the conceptual framework. Equally important is an ability to analyze and reduce risk through preparedness, mitigation, prevention, and protection.

In areas where adaptive capacity and risk reduction strategies are weak, shocks and stresses often undercut development gains, setting communities back on the path of inclusive growth.



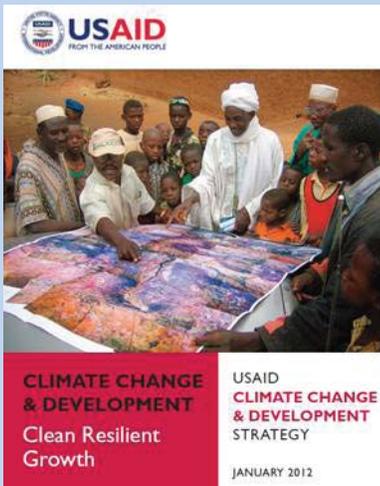
Source: Siaka Millogo

Building Resilience in Burkina Faso: Safieta's Story

In February 2012, after a year of bad rains, a group of four women farmers in Burkina Faso were unable to harvest much of the maize they had planted during the rainy season. Between them, they had 31 children and no husbands. But thanks to a USAID-Catholic Relief Services program started 7 years ago to increase the resilience of villagers dependent upon rain-fed crops, they did have land plots they were able to fill with bright green onion sprouts. Key to their success was obtaining secure access to land, small-scale irrigation investments, and training on new crops. While the program ended 2 years ago, these farmers, including a proud woman named Safieta, are continuing to thrive on the proceeds of their dry season market gardens. "We chose onions," she noted, "because if the water pump fails for a few days, they are strong enough to survive."

"I am resilient now," Safieta said, laughing. "Just like the onions."

Drawing Lessons from Ongoing Resilience Activities: Global Climate Change and Development



Climate change is a major stress that must be considered in designing strategies to build resilience. Taking steps to anticipate and incorporate plans for responding to potential climate change impacts into economic and political systems is referred to as “adaptation.” Climate adaptation requires that we utilize science, technology, innovation, and the best available information to understand and respond to unavoidable impacts. USAID’s Climate Change and Development Strategy’s second strategic objective is “Increasing resilience of people, places, and livelihoods” through investments in improved access to science and analysis for decision making, effective governance systems, and replicating and scaling up proven successes. USAID is working to incorporate new norms from the start – from rising temperatures to more variable rainfall and greater incidence of drought to stronger storms.

USAID, as part of the President’s Global Climate Change Initiative, promotes the integration of climate change to support food security, health, governance, and disaster risk reduction (DRR), among other goals. For example, USAID is piloting preventative, longer-term approaches to DRR than is typical in traditional

DRR, which works only in areas that are faced with specific hazards. Considering the current and future effects of climate change allows us not only to better predict, prepare for, and respond to shocks and stresses (e.g., hurricanes, flooding, and droughts) but also to improve planning for the long-term stresses of climate change. The Global Climate Change Initiative is a critical component of our overall resilience efforts; appropriately applying this guidance to climate change programs will strengthen our ability to achieve our objectives.

The components of the conceptual framework are meant to guide our work rather than comprise a checklist. Every context will require a tailored approach, and USAID’s specific contributions to building resilience will be adapted in a way that aligns and complements country and regional plans and works to strengthen the country enabling environment through support for appropriate policies and reforms. In addition, our approach focuses on close coordination with other partners, including other U.S. Government agencies, international donors, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector.

In developing a resilience strategy, multisectoral considerations must be taken into account. For example, a focus on drought-resistant agriculture and livestock could be supported by work to strengthen effective institutions to monitor and disseminate forecasts, provide extension services, and strengthen financial services that promote savings and insurance. Attention should be paid to different groups within communities; for example, investing in youth, who play increasingly prominent and intergenerational roles as agents of recovery and change, should be seen as foundational to reducing risk. Many underlying factors may also increase vulnerability and should be considered.

Population growth, for example, is increasing pressures in many places of recurrent crisis, signaling that efforts to meet the unmet need for family planning may be a necessary component of a larger strategy to build resilience. Helping vulnerable communities predict, prepare for, withstand, and recover from shocks and crises through disaster risk reduction efforts and early warning systems, such as USAID’s Famine Early Warning System (FEWSNET), will continue to be an important part of USAID’s approach.

We must also provide relief and promote development in ways that more effectively reduce gaps between males and females and involve and meet the different needs of men and women.⁵ Despite the fact that women often face a range of unique challenges in areas of recurrent crisis – and often bear the heaviest burden of shocks and stresses – they also possess enormous individual and collective capacity to help themselves, their families, and their communities. A 2009 study examined the role of Sudanese women in improving household food security and suggested that rural women are more likely than men to effectively use available local resources in diversification strategies. Furthermore, women with adequate access to food production sources (i.e., agricultural land, home gardens, and backyard

⁵ Consistent with USAID’s Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment, we use data analyses that inform strategy and program design, and our programs address the different priorities, needs, and vulnerabilities of women and men; reduce gaps between men and women; engage females as leaders and implementing partners; and create effective monitoring and evaluation metrics that hold us accountable for delivering results for women and other marginalized groups.

Building Resilience: The Role of Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions are aimed at reducing the risk associated with specific types of hazards and disasters. In contrast to general development programs or broader resilience programming, DRR programs focus on potential hazards or shocks and generally target groups that are particularly vulnerable to these hazards and risks. USAID's DRR programs focus specifically on (1) prioritizing and strengthening early warning, preparedness, mitigation, and prevention; (2) integrating preparedness and mitigation with disaster response, early recovery, and transitions to foster resilience; and (3) supporting diversified livelihood strategies. For instance, a DRR program might assist a community living in a seismically active zone with devising protocols and procedures to respond to earthquakes or tsunamis. Similarly, a DRR program might assist city planners in flood-prone areas with shoring up rural and urban infrastructure to mitigate the negative impacts of flooding.

Resilience, on the other hand, seeks to reduce risk in a broader sense by strengthening the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to cope with both anticipated and unanticipated negative shocks across a wider range of different areas of intervention. While DRR programs are central to the goal of building resilience, they are not sufficient in and of themselves. Becoming resilient requires a range of approaches to help communities develop the capacity to manage the range of challenges that threaten stability, whether sudden or longer term, urban or rural, natural or human-made. DRR programs are one part of the solution; to achieve resilience in any given area, a broader concerted and coordinated effort by both development and humanitarian actors is required. These approaches should integrate DRR with a diverse combination of other interdependent activities that contribute to increasing adaptive capacity, improving the ability to address and reduce risk, and improving the social and economic conditions of vulnerable populations.



Source: USAID

Pineapple pioneer Masum Ahmed showcases his contoured pineapple field in Hail Haor, Bangladesh.

Functioning institutions of good governance and democratic accountability are essential to developing a country's adaptive capacity and its ability to address and reduce risk. Good governance requires institutions and processes that are transparent, accountable, and responsive to the people they serve and that promote positive state-society relationships (including a strong civil society and a vibrant private sector). Governance capacity determines the ability of the state to respond effectively to crises and to address the long-term development needs required to effectively address recurrent issues. Furthermore, good governance is crucial to prevent and mitigate conflict, which plays a detrimental role in many of the communities where we are applying a resilience approach and which has, in past efforts to build resilience, stood decisively in the way of sustainable progress.

Any approach that seeks to build resilience must be informed by conflict dynamics, as humanitarian need may be great in areas emerging from conflict or still fragile. Programming that integrates conflict resolution and peace building, and strengthens institutions of good governance, plays an important role in contributing to the sustainability of development gains. In fragile states where these challenges are particularly acute, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States⁷ provides both a normative framework and top-level guidance for focusing the combined efforts of host country leaders and international donors on inclusive politics and strengthening institutions of governance, which are essential to building states, peace, and resilience.

The links between the many important factors required to build resilience are complex. The challenge is to determine which institutional, policy, and political constraints pose the most significant impediments to building resilience and which are amenable

plots), different sources of incomes, and the capacity to control the choice of foods being prepared and consumed are better able to improve their household's food security and nutrition.⁶ Approaches that systematically and visibly reduce key gender gaps and ensure that women are given the tools, resources, and opportunities to lead and participate are critical to the success of our efforts to achieve sustainable change.

6 Ibnouf, Fatma. "The Role of Women in Providing and Improving Household Food Security in Sudan: Implications for Reducing Hunger and Malnutrition." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, Web. <http://www.bridgew.edu/soas/jiws/May09/SudanFoodSecurity.pdf>.

7 Find more information on the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States at <http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhl4/about/new-deal-for-engagement-in-fragile-states.html>.

to reform and change through programmatic interventions. This includes deciding the appropriate level at which to engage. Often, communities that face recurrent crisis are also areas that receive limited political attention. Sustainable progress requires a deliberate shift in this dynamic. It is the responsibility of governments at all levels to ensure that these vulnerable communities receive the appropriate support, and it is the responsibility of international partners to support that transition to more robust engagement. Making an entire sector, system, or nation more resilient requires a complex level of engagement with host country partners that are able to exercise key state functions and demonstrate the political will for reform in areas where structural problems interfere with or undermine resilience.

SELECTING AREAS OF FOCUS

While the concept of resilience has broad applicability to many of the environments in which we work, this policy and program guidance is specifically focused on areas of recurrent crisis – the area of intersection where chronic poverty overlaps with shocks and stresses – and where high levels of humanitarian assistance have historically been dedicated and/or where shocks and stresses create significant loss.

The initial application of this policy and program guidance is focused on the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, where there is a clear and significant commitment from partner countries and the international community to build resilience and where we have already begun to implement the approach and operational changes outlined in this guidance. We also recognize the need for a resilience approach in other areas where we work. For example, approximately 80 percent of global disaster-related economic losses occur in Asia. The nature of shocks and stresses that typically affect Asia, for example, may be different than those in the Horn of Africa or the Sahel or other regions. By undertaking the operational agenda described in this guidance and applying it to the contexts of different regions, USAID has the opportunity to build resilience in a diverse set of countries and regions around the world. Recognizing the broader applicability of this work, we have committed to identifying additional focus countries or regions following the issuance of this guidance.

There is significant support across USAID for the approach outlined in this guidance, and many of our missions have been building resilience at the household and community levels

for some time. In addition, disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience programs have created a foundation from which we can expand our focus. The commitment of our staff to apply a resilience agenda is reflective of our conviction that this approach has the potential to exponentially increase our effectiveness and impact.

We also recognize the need to develop a “proof of concept” for the approach presented in this guidance and are aware of the significant investments of time, human, and financial resources and attention from leaders at all levels that achieving success will require. Therefore, we will intentionally focus the initial application of this guidance on a limited number of countries and regions, allowing us to fully and systematically develop an evidence base. A small but diverse set of focus countries will allow us to be informed by a variety of circumstances that will contribute to this evidence base. These countries will be chosen based on conversations between headquarters and our field missions. USAID will rely on a series of criteria for identifying and prioritizing additional focus countries, including those outlined in the box below:

Recurrent Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historically high levels of USAID humanitarian assistance in areas of chronic vulnerability
Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High rates of chronic poverty Persistently high acute malnutrition Persistent humanitarian caseloads Conflict/fragility risk Exposure to hazards, including natural hazards
Enabling Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political will and institutional performance Effective and responsive leadership at the local, national, and regional levels Resilience activities already under way by partner countries and communities Minimum level of security exists to achieve resilience objectives
Comparative Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing USAID humanitarian programs Existing USAID development programs Programs, presence, and capabilities of other U.S. Government agencies

CASE STUDY: THE HORN OF AFRICA JOINT PLANNING CELL

The human and economic toll of the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa was a stark reminder of the consequences of resource degradation, reduced access to and competition over range land resources, climate change, weak governance, and a history of marginalization and underinvestment in the dry lands. Responses to previous droughts, such as the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative in the early 1990s, had limited long-term impact. Determined to do business differently, USAID established a Horn of Africa Joint Planning Cell (JPC) to identify new ways of utilizing humanitarian and development assistance around the shared aim of building resilience among chronically vulnerable populations by comprehensively addressing the root causes of their vulnerability and facilitating inclusive economic growth.



A key moment in the JPC's efforts was the articulation of a shared framework for building resilience in the dry lands of the Horn of Africa between our humanitarian relief and development experts. This framework was based on analysis and understanding of the dynamics of change in pastoralist livelihood systems. Once agreed to, the possibilities for layering, integrating, and sequencing a wide range of existing humanitarian and development efforts with new investments around the shared aim of building resilience became clear, and the humanitarian and development sides of USAID worked in a more coherent and strategic manner than ever before. The very act of humanitarian and development experts engaging in this type of joint analysis and planning has demonstrated to all involved the power of bringing together the diverse perspectives, talents, and expertise within the Agency.

Doing business differently has already borne fruit. Most notably, humanitarian relief and recovery programs are no longer conceived of as an end in themselves, but as a foundation and platform upon which new and existing resilience and development investments must and will build. As an example, USAID has strategically layered new resilience and economic growth investments in Kenya's arid lands on top of existing World Food Programme Food for Asset programs funded by the Office of Food for Peace and sequenced these investments to build on the successes of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance's (OFDA's) 3-year Arid Lands Recovery Program. A new arid lands health program and a jointly funded OFDA and USAID/Kenya water program round out the suite of layered, sequenced, and integrated humanitarian and development investments.

CASE STUDY: THE SAHEL JOINT PLANNING CELL

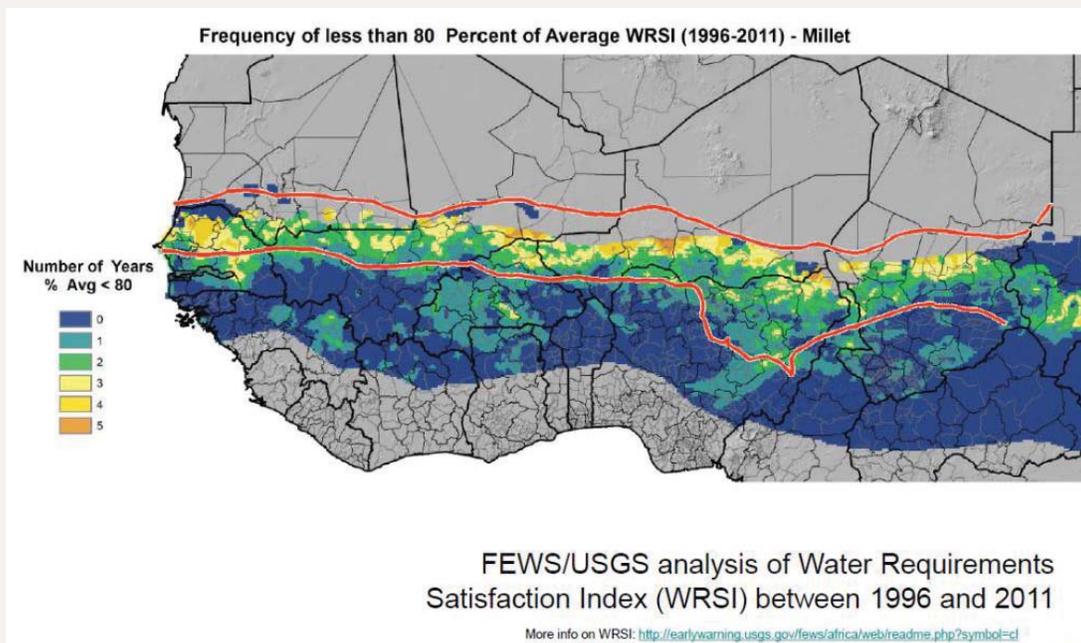
Significant chronic vulnerability in the Sahel has taken hold as a result of a combination of factors, including poverty, marginalization, weak governance, low rainfall, population pressure and high population growth, food price volatility, and climate variability. In an effort to move beyond addressing the symptoms of these factors, the Sahel Joint Planning Cell (JPC) stood up in early 2012 and established a multidisciplinary team from across USAID to develop a strategy for building resilience in the region. Participants include USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance; Food for Peace; the Bureau for Food Security; the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment; the Global Health Bureau; the West Africa, Mali, and Senegal Missions; and USAID staff in Niger and Burkina Faso.

The JPC seeks to layer, integrate, and sequence existing humanitarian and development assistance to support resilience building efforts and is working to prioritize countries and livelihood zones for additional resilience investments based on an analysis of chronic vulnerability, USAID's comparative advantage, and the enabling environment. The team is focused on leveraging local resilience adaptations already under way. The expansion of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration and water harvesting – practices that have resulted in the “re-greening” of more than 5 million hectares in Niger and Burkina Faso – provide prominent examples of adaptations.

Based on lessons learned from the Horn of Africa, the Sahel JPC is working toward identifying various models for sequencing, layering, and integrating humanitarian and development programs to build resilience. A robust learning agenda will help identify innovations and best practices in this regard.

The Sahel JPC is coordinating with regional institutions, national governments, U.N. agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations, research institutions, and other partners through its participation in the European Union-led Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel (AGIR-Sahel) partnership. Given the size and breadth of the challenge in the Sahel, this strategic coordination is critical. It will also ensure that investments in building resilience in the Sahel by USAID and others align with existing policies and strategies, including regional and national Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) compacts.

Recurring Zone of Drought in the Region



Key Resilience Principles

This guidance and its implementation are guided by key resilience principles that reflect our core values. A set of four resilience principles will be applied across our resilience work.

Build Resilience as a Common Objective	We will build resilience as a common objective across development and humanitarian assistance programs. To achieve this, we will bring together our relief and development teams to develop a common understanding of risks and opportunities and identify ways to layer, integrate, and sequence programs. Critically, we will better coordinate humanitarian and development funding while maintaining the integrity of these funding streams.
Create and Foster Linkages	Building resilience requires the involvement of stakeholders at every level – from community members to international policy makers. At each level, we will promote inclusive dialogue, with a focus on promoting inclusive, accountable governance and on reaching the marginalized and most vulnerable. We will work to ensure that there are appropriate vertical linkages between the different levels, as national and regional action is critical, but this action must be responsive and informed by community needs.
Enable Host Country/ Regional Ownership	Good governance, political will, and leadership by national and regional actors are especially critical to achieving success. ⁸ Resilience programming should be rooted in the society in which it occurs, drawing on the ideas, resources, and desires of local stakeholders, including the most vulnerable and often excluded groups. It is critical that our efforts help build the capacity of host country systems and enable countries to take the lead in their own development. Country-owned and -led strategies can help create a “double compact” between the international community and host country governments and between those governments and their citizens.
Focus on the Long Term	Building resilience requires an investment of time that should not be understated, and our ability to build resilience in the short term should not be oversold. Thus, our approach to building resilience must be sustainable and effective over the long run, focusing on continued progress and achieving short-term milestones along the way. We must employ longer-term planning horizons and consider predicted future trends, such as anticipated climate change, that will impact our work.

⁸ Building Resilience for Aid Effectiveness, 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, November 30, 2011. http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/images/stories/Side_event_47_summary.pdf

Core Operational Principles

As laid out by the USAID Policy Framework 2011–2015,⁹ USAID also has a set of core operational principles that are being applied across our entire portfolio. In addition to the resilience principles, these operational principles are key considerations in our resilience work.

<p>Promote Gender Equality and Female Empowerment</p>	<p>Research shows that shocks due to disasters reinforce and perpetuate gender inequality, as shocks can disproportionately affect women’s access to income, assets, and other resources. As there are significant differences in how women cope with shocks as opposed to men,¹⁰ we will employ an approach that reduces gaps between males and females, empowers women, and promotes inclusive growth.</p>
<p>Apply Science, Technology, and Innovation</p>	<p>Science and technological innovations are critical in identifying vulnerabilities, improving and using early warning systems, and accelerating response. Innovations such as mobile money and drought-resistant crops can play important roles in building resilience. We will promote and pilot new technologies and innovations in addition to scaling up proven ones.</p>
<p>Apply Selectivity and Focus</p>	<p>We will ensure that our resources are strategically invested in priority regions, countries, and subnational areas; these decisions will be made by our field missions in collaboration with headquarters. We will base these decisions on criteria laid out in this paper, including levels of persistent humanitarian assistance, chronic vulnerability, conflict/fragility risk, USAID’s existing capacity, and the availability and willingness of host-country partners.</p>
<p>Measure and Evaluate Impact</p>	<p>We will ensure accountability and an effective allocation of resources by informing our decisions with evidence, data, and the findings of publicly disclosed evaluations. We will also continue to improve knowledge management in order to better catalogue and utilize those institutional lessons learned.</p>
<p>Build in Sustainability from the Start</p>	<p>We will promote ownership by strengthening the capacity of host countries to manage and lead, as no strategy imposed from the outside can bring about sustainable, positive change. Our interventions will be tailored to those affected and the particular shock they face by incorporating local and traditional knowledge,¹¹ taking into account diverse needs and priorities, especially among the most vulnerable.</p>
<p>Apply Integrated Approaches</p>	<p>In our efforts to build resilience, we will consider humanitarian assistance in strategic planning and project design, improve coordination between humanitarian and development assistance, and develop budgets that recognize the interdependence of humanitarian and development assistance. We will utilize three approaches to accomplish this: layered programs across sectors and funding streams; integrated programming to address multidimensional challenges; and strategic sequencing of programs to maximize long-term impact.</p>
<p>Leverage “Solution-Holders” and Partner Strategically</p>	<p>We will promote the strategic division of labor with a wide range of partners to improve harmonization and avoid the duplication of effort. We must collectively align with regional and national plans to work toward common goals, and these will best be defined by our country partners. We will work to create and sustain partnerships between humanitarian and development actors as well as continue to work closely with our interagency colleagues and engage with a wide range of actors, including the private sector and civil society.</p>

⁹ To read the USAID Policy Framework 2011–2015, visit http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/USAID_PolicyFramework.PDF.

¹⁰ FAO. Deriving Food Security Information from National Household Budget Surveys: Experiences, Achievements, Challenges (2008); Sibrian, R. (ed), FAO. Food Security Information for Decision-Making: Measuring Resilience, Concept Note on the Resilience Tool. 2010.

¹¹ Gómez-Baggethun, E., et al. Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Community Resilience to Environmental Extremes: A Case Study in Doñana, SW Spain. *Global Environ. Change* (2012), doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2012.02.005.

An Agenda for Operational Change

With this policy and program guidance, USAID has committed to ensuring that integrated teams of humanitarian and development assistance experts undertake:

- ▶ **Joint Problem Analysis and Objective Setting**
- ▶ **Intensified, Coordinated Strategic Planning around Resilience**
- ▶ **Mutually Informed Project Designs and Procurements**
- ▶ **Robust Learning**

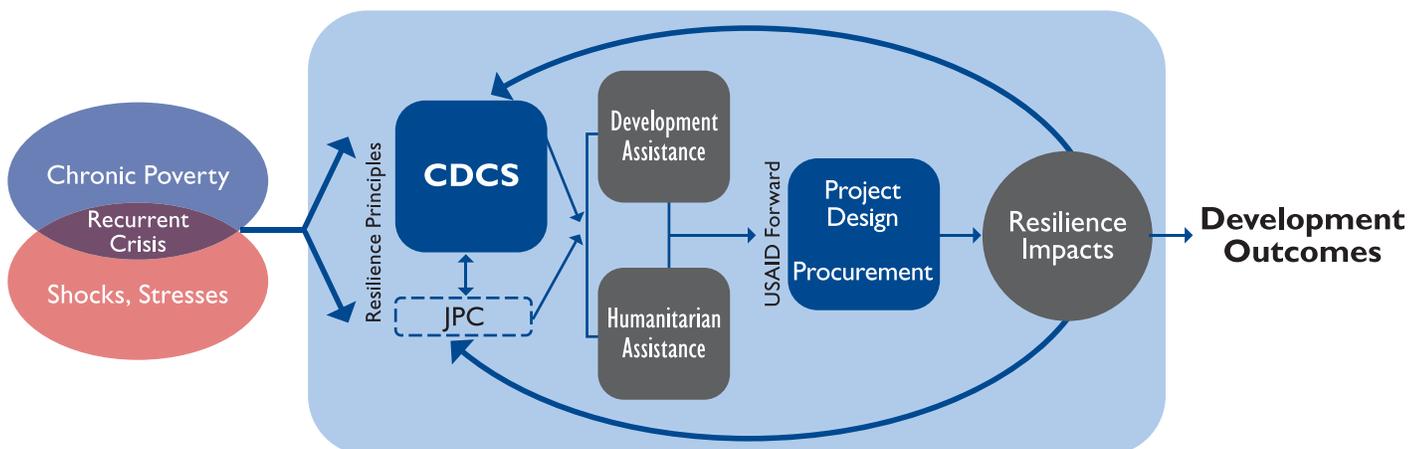
These efforts will be supported by

- **Leadership Action to Address Barriers to Change**

Over USAID's 50 years, multiple efforts to improve development outcomes in areas of recurrent crisis have provided a rich set of lessons that inform this guidance. From the drought response in the Sahel in the early 1970s to the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative in the early 1990s to the "Breaking the Cycle of Famine" efforts in Ethiopia in 2003–2004, we know that a key barrier in past efforts has been the physical and often philosophical divide between disaster and development experts with separate offices, programming systems, and objectives preventing collaboration to the extent that is required.

Today, based on this history of successes and challenges, USAID has a renewed focus on building bridges across our operations to overcome these barriers. Successfully building resilience requires coordinated, integrated teams of humanitarian and development professionals working closely together. This policy and program guidance focuses on allowing sufficient flexibility in our institutional process to foster this collaboration. Working primarily through the Agency's core policy, planning, budgeting, and learning processes, we believe that we can make significant strides toward integrating resilience more effectively into our work and improving coordination. We intend, in part, to judge the success of this policy and program guidance against our ability to do this. We have put special emphasis on the importance of leadership in fostering a flexible, problem solving approach and moving past operational bottlenecks, with a goal of empowering people close to the solutions.

Building resilience requires an iterative process in which development assistance and humanitarian assistance are well coordinated throughout planning, project design, procurement, and learning.



I. JOINT PROBLEM ANALYSIS

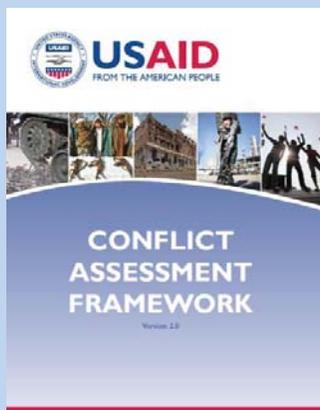
To better coordinate and collaborate, we must ensure that our humanitarian relief and development programs are informed by the same problem set, enabling them to mutually support one another. When each team is using separate analyses to define different objectives, we are less likely to address the underlying causes contributing to systemic issues.

USAID's multiyear strategic planning process, the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS),¹² requires that USAID missions base country strategies on evidence and analysis drawn from relevant studies and data. A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring that missions approach this analysis from a multisectoral and holistic viewpoint, identifying the links among various problems and sectors before proposing a programmatic approach to alleviate challenges. So far, we have made significant progress in undertaking this analysis across the different pieces of our development assistance, but far less progress has been made in undertaking joint analysis between development and humanitarian experts.

Under this policy and program guidance, USAID will require that this cross-sectoral analysis and research also include humanitarian assistance experts and considerations. For example, a comprehensive risk and hazard analysis undertaken collaboratively by host governments and donors, with both development and humanitarian experts, can provide a common understanding of the primary risks and hazards that may have an impact on population and undermine its investments and progress. There are a number of tools available to develop this joint problem set, such as conflict vulnerability assessments, gender analyses, hazard analyses, democracy and governance assessments, and disaster risk assessments. The Agency will work to develop additional tools, where needed, and will also draw on the particular strengths of other U.S. Government agencies to assist this process. This coordinated evidence-based analysis will be used to inform strategic planning efforts.

Joint problem analysis is critical to ensure that humanitarian relief and development teams develop common objectives and a coordinated framework of actions for building resilience.

Integrating Resilience and Conflict Management in Analysis



USAID has long recognized that armed conflict, political instability, and violent extremism pose direct threats to development. In the pastoralist regions of East Africa, for example, cattle raiding and militia attacks create immediate shocks, destroying lives and assets. The indirect effects of the violence place further stresses on communities through displacement, restricted movement, social upheaval, malnutrition, and market disruption.

As articulated in USAID's Conflict Assessment Framework, any analysis of conflict is incomplete without attention to those attitudes, structures, and processes in society that contribute to stability. Despite widespread poverty and suffering, mass violence is not the norm in most communities because states and societies have developed institutions to manage disputes and govern agreements peacefully. Among pastoralists, for instance, existing and newly mediated arrangements can help communities manage stresses and adapt to new conditions without resorting to violence.

Conducting a conflict assessment can be a critical first step in taking local context as the starting point and building existing institutions to be more effective and legitimate in conflict-affected regions, such as those in the Horn of Africa. Based on recent assessments, USAID is now developing programs across East Africa that link conflict management, good governance, and climate adaptation activities to foster greater resilience.

¹² These 5-year strategies define what development results are to be achieved in a country or region and explain why these results will have strategic impact. These strategies also have a strong focus on alignment with host country plans and provide a key opportunity to engage with partner countries on our development agenda in the country, including resilience.

2. COORDINATED STRATEGIC PLANNING

Resilience programming requires that humanitarian and development assistance have a shared understanding of risks and vulnerability to foster collaboration. Disaster response is not always focused on reducing vulnerability, leaving communities no better prepared to deal with the next crisis.¹³ And development assistance is often not designed in a way to maximize and sustain gains achieved during humanitarian response. **Recognizing the interdependence of these activities, development and humanitarian assistance experts must undertake coordinated strategic planning efforts that define long-term investments to build resilience.**

Under this guidance, in areas of recurrent crisis, humanitarian assistance will be taken into consideration during strategic planning efforts.

Agency-wide and resilience-specific planning processes must inform and be informed by one another to ensure sustainable results. Country Development Cooperation Strategies provide a process to assess, prioritize, and plan USAID's response to a country's or region's specific development opportunities and challenges.¹⁴ In the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, Joint Planning Cells¹⁵ have brought together humanitarian and development experts from different disciplines to analyze the root causes of vulnerability and develop a resilience strategy and programs (see case studies on pages 14 and 15). These temporary structures facilitate working across USAID's bureaus, missions, funding sources, and sectors in times of acute crisis and create a forum for regional approaches to transnational complexities. JPCs may not be necessary in every context where we employ a resilience approach; where they do exist, the two strategic planning processes must be fully linked to ensure coherence and maximize effectiveness. Missions should review their CDCS and, where relevant, JPC strategies annually and make changes as appropriate based on changes in the country context.

The CDCS process does not typically include an analysis of humanitarian assistance, focusing primarily on USAID-managed

development assistance. Based on the experience of the JPCs and under this guidance, in areas of recurrent crisis,¹⁶ humanitarian assistance will now be taken into consideration during the CDCS process. As a result, this process will facilitate a common understanding of where and how shocks may undermine development gains and will serve as a forum for considering coordination between humanitarian response and development programs. Based on historical trends of humanitarian assistance and shocks, missions should undertake strategic planning of development resources in areas of recurrent crisis in a way that is informed by the anticipated effects of risks and vulnerability and the likely humanitarian need.

In developing strategies, teams should thoroughly consider how to layer, integrate, and sequence humanitarian and development programs.¹⁷ We will continue to maintain the lifesaving speed of humanitarian assistance and the longer-term focus of development assistance. The important, distinct goals of these two capabilities will not be abandoned through this process; rather, to the extent that we intend to build resilience, the interrelationship of these two important components must be clearly defined and articulated.¹⁸ The objective is to attain a shared understanding of the risk to development gains and apply resources appropriately against a plan that takes into account that interdependence.

USAID's country and regional strategies will be bolstered by the wide range of assets and capabilities of other U.S. Government agencies. USAID will work closely with other agencies to ensure that our distinct – but complementary – contributions to building resilience are coordinated. This includes ensuring that appropriate U.S. Government representation is included in strategic planning processes. We will also work closely with the U.S. Department of State to develop a strong diplomatic strategy of engagement to undertake appropriate actions to build resilience; encourage host countries and other donors to allocate sufficient resources to the crisis and coordinate activities; and, to the extent possible, ensure that our efforts are consistent with and supported by national and regional policies, strategies, and institutions.

13 USAID. Building Resilience and Fostering Growth in the Horn of Africa. Web. <http://transition.usaid.gov/resilience/USAIDResiliencePaper.pdf>.

14 USAID Transition Strategies are a subset of the CDCS process. These strategies will be developed in countries where full application of the CDCS guidance is not possible due to factors such as the lack of a legitimate host country government counterpart or rapidly evolving political, economic, or social dynamics that make it difficult or impossible to achieve sustainable development outcomes during a 5-year period.

15 A JPC is a group of humanitarian and development experts from different disciplines who work together to analyze the root causes of vulnerability in a particular geographic area and develop a resilience strategy and programming.

16 We will use the initial stage of the CDCS process – the parameter setting stage – to engage in a conversation between headquarters and field missions and assess whether a particular country has areas of recurrent crisis and must apply this requirement.

17 This policy and program guidance will be followed by more detailed operational examples of layering, integrating, and sequencing humanitarian and development programs.

18 The inclusion of humanitarian assistance in such plans does not guarantee that those resources will be available over the time of the strategy, as the Agency must have the ability to reprioritize resources as emergencies emerge.

Resilience in the USAID Ethiopia Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2011–2015

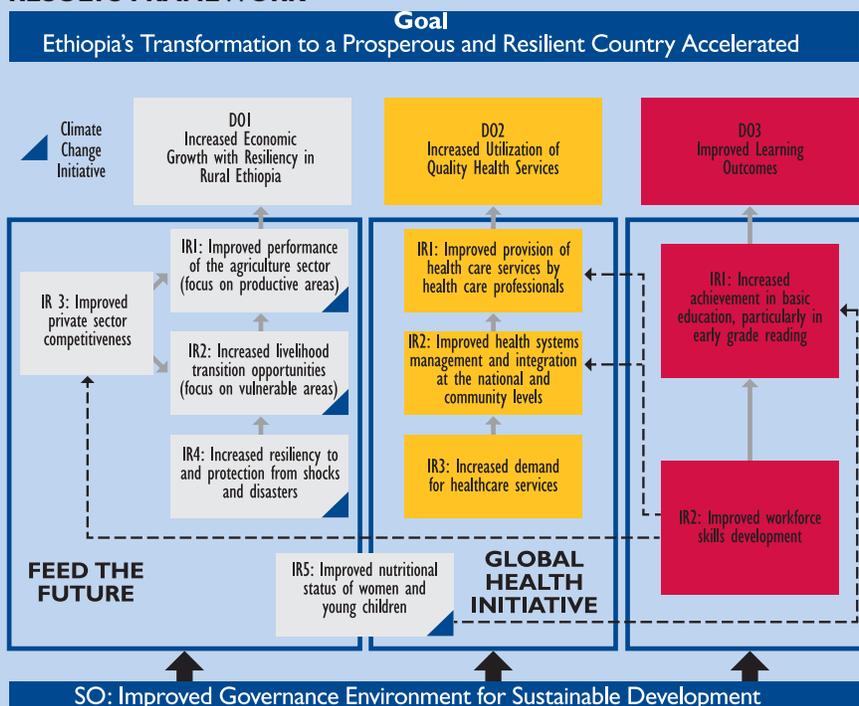
The 5-year goal of USAID/Ethiopia is “Ethiopia’s Transformation to a Prosperous and Resilient Country Accelerated.” This goal is closely aligned with the Government of Ethiopia’s National Transformation Plan, which incorporates resilience, as well as local-level development strategies that incorporate resilience and promote host country ownership. In developing this strategy, USAID/Ethiopia built upon decades of effective work to improve resilience to climatic and economic shocks in Ethiopia by investing in progress toward the sustainability and expansion of relevant systems (economic, social, political, and agricultural).

This desired focus is reflected in the Mission’s first development objective: increased economic growth with resiliency in rural Ethiopia. The Mission transformed its portfolio to include continued humanitarian support and capacity building programs for disaster relief response, now complemented by a focus on continued, sustainable agricultural growth. As part of the new emphasis on sustainable interventions, the democracy and governance portfolio was integrated into a conflict mitigation and prevention program at the federal, state, and local levels, which will continue to improve governance as a key component to sustainable responses across the entire USAID portfolio.

The strategy also focuses on sustaining Ethiopia’s impressive, continued economic growth while incorporating each of the three Presidential Initiatives – Feed the Future, Global Health, and Global Climate Change – and unites the efforts of three offices within USAID/Ethiopia: Office of Business, Environment, Agriculture and Trade; Office of Assets and Livelihood Transition; and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Furthermore, the assessments that informed the CDCS showed that increasing food security and rural incomes requires a focus that develops the full growth potential in “Productive Ethiopia,” combined with proactive efforts engaging the private sector and government officials to link vulnerable populations in “Hungry Ethiopia” and “Pastoral Ethiopia,” with new growth opportunities. This linkage builds upon and supports increased resiliency of vulnerable populations to disasters (including assets and capacity protection, and, where required, humanitarian assistance), improved nutritional status, and an enabling environment that supports increased investment and broad-based growth.

Under the strategy, USAID now provides predictable and timely transfers of cash and food earned through public works that build community assets. Safety nets and, when necessary, food and non-food humanitarian assistance, give recipients the breathing room they need to protect assets and build resilience. There is also a Mission-wide focus on strengthening intergovernmental relationships to manage and reduce conflict, and on working through state governments to develop and operationalize conflict early warning and rapid response mechanisms to improve state-level responses to external and internal shocks.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK



3. MUTUALLY INFORMED PROJECT DESIGNS AND PROCUREMENTS

Project design is the key mechanism for identifying how best to achieve the anticipated results expressed in the CDCS and JPC strategic plans.¹⁹ Information gained from joint problem analysis and strategic planning, including relevant assessments, provides critical insight into the proper sequencing and combination of distinct activities or interventions as determined through the project design process. Rather than simply addressing issues as part of a perceived “continuum” from emergency relief to longer-term development, practitioners of resilience programming will likely need to design projects capable of addressing immediate and longer-term needs simultaneously.

All project designs for which resilience has been identified as a strategic outcome are expected to consider the resilience principles and operational principles described in this guidance. Projects will likely have multiple mechanisms and address one or more sectors; this mix will reflect the complex nature of the problem. The design of resilience activities should consider the entire spectrum of funding and programmatic options available in our diverse humanitarian and development assistance portfolios, while recognizing the legislative and policy constraints of these funding sources, to promote a dynamic, interdependent set of activities that deliver durable inclusive growth. In addition, consistent with priorities established under USAID Forward, an increased use of host country systems and systems strengthening should be used to promote lasting institutions and enable host country capacity.

Building upon considerations developed in the strategic planning phase, resilience programs should:

- 1) **Layer** programming of humanitarian and development assistance in targeted geographic areas.
- 2) **Integrate** humanitarian assistance programming objectives into development programs and vice versa.
- 3) Use a logical, **sequenced** phasing of humanitarian relief and development programming.

Development programs can be designed in a way that provides greater flexibility, where needed, in order to address potential changes in the operating environment. For example, a “crisis modifier” allows teams to include some additional resources in a mechanism with the expectation that surge efforts may be needed, or changes are likely, given volatility in the operating environment. There are a variety of different approaches that can be tailored during project design; a combination of different approaches is likely to be the most effective means to advance programs to build resilience.

There are also a number of considerations that must be assessed to maximize the effectiveness of our programs. For example, humanitarian assistance funds and programs often have a variety of authorities and abilities already established (e.g., notwithstanding authority, class waivers for source, nationality, and restricted goods), while the design of longer-term development programs may not have similar authorities or pre-established waivers in place. Teams must consider these practical issues early so potential issues can be resolved at the outset of the design process.

¹⁹ Specifically, the elements (e.g., development objectives, intermediate results) of the results framework serve as the foundation for “projects” – defined as a set of executed interventions or activities over an established time frame and an estimated budget, identified through a design process that is intended to achieve a discrete development result (such as resilience or enabler of resilience) by solving an associated problem (such as a cause of chronic vulnerability).

4. ROBUST LEARNING AGENDA

Robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning agendas must accompany our resilience efforts. We have placed a particular emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and learning in the JPCs (and will do the same in other future areas of focus) in order to uncover lessons learned in these regions and to allow us to capture the successes and challenges of employing new approaches.

Given the many forces impacting chronically vulnerable communities, monitoring and evaluating resilience-building efforts is a highly complex undertaking. Efforts to measure our ability to “build resilience” must be highly context specific. These efforts will require the use of both quantitative and qualitative data and indicators at multiple levels, including the resilience of people, households, communities, countries, and systems. Practice is evolving in this area. The international development community is working to develop shared principles for measuring resilience as well as specific indicators, with an emphasis on increased adaptive capacity as a proxy for resilience itself, in the event that no shocks hit during the period of collection. USAID is committed to extending and elevating these discussions. We are also committed to involving affected communities in assessing the success of interventions in ways that are meaningful to them.

While there will be some common indicators across focus areas, many indicators will be contextualized and highly dependent on the nature of the local problems and vulnerabilities we are trying to address. Indicators such as the diversity of livelihood strategies, assets, and social networks; propensity for household savings; and financial opportunities may, as part of a set, provide insight into increased adaptive capacity. Gender-sensitive indicators are also important to our learning agenda. In the Horn of Africa, for example, our JPC is using the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index²⁰ to measure change in the role in household decision making around dry lands production,

access to productive capital, income, leadership roles within the community, and labor time allocations. In addition, more traditional development indicators – such as those related to income, food security, and nutrition – will be critical, as will versions of these indicators that reflect the distinct nature of resilience investments. In the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, depth of poverty and global acute malnutrition will serve as contextual complements to measures of prevalence of poverty, chronic malnutrition, and hunger, as measured by the Household Hunger Scale.²¹

In areas of recurrent crises, communities usually experience a gradual worsening of conditions. Monitoring is an important mechanism to diagnose conditions as they occur and allow us to react accordingly. The interventions required to respond to highly dynamic environments will likely change as the situation evolves, as will the intended outcomes and, therefore, what teams are evaluating. A dynamic system for monitoring and evaluation should enhance our capacity to adapt resilience programs to real conditions to build on what works while eliminating what does not. Importantly, these approaches must be undertaken collaboratively by humanitarian and development teams to ensure that unanticipated negative consequences are avoided.

Finally, we will also use this policy and program guidance as a framework for evaluating the extent to which coordination between humanitarian and development teams was achieved; lessons learned for future efforts; and which models of layering, integrating, and sequencing humanitarian and development efforts yield the greatest resilience gains. Evidence-based knowledge regarding the effectiveness of alternative approaches to building resilience and cost benefit analysis of these various alternatives are especially high priorities for informing future resilience programming.

²⁰ Learn more about the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index at <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index>.

²¹ For more information on the Household Hunger Scale, visit <http://www.fantaproject.org/publications/tn12.shtml>.

Conclusion



Source: Morgana Wingard

A Development Credit Authority loan empowers Abe to produce more than 5 million eggs a year and enough chicken meat to feed 108,000 people.

Building resilience is a complex, multidisciplinary, and long-term commitment and, likewise, facilitating operational change requires significant investments of time, human and financial resources, and attention from leaders at all levels. USAID is committed to making these investments based on our belief that the theory of change presented in this policy and program guidance has the potential to contribute to transformational changes in the communities in which we serve and in the way that we operate as an agency.

In addition to the clear need for the continued provision of human and financial resources to this agenda, the spectrum of commitments presented in this policy and program guidance requires that, as an Agency, we foster a culture of operational support and, where possible, flexibility to maximize creativity and results. We recognize that our humanitarian assistance and development assistance are interdependent, and that interdependence must be reflected in our operations. Through the

experience of the Joint Planning Cells in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, we have seen the transformational effect that wide-ranging collaboration and determined commitment can have on the way we operate as an agency. Multidisciplinary teams in the field are developing innovative strategies to build resilience; in Washington, these teams are being supported across the Agency. We have seen significant efforts to remove bottlenecks, address potential staffing shortages, and remedy procurement delays, and from these experiences, we are developing lessons that can be applied to other circumstances.

Through this policy guidance, we also are committed to ensuring that we dedicate the appropriate human resources to areas where we are focused on building resilience. In particular, we will ensure that training is provided for both humanitarian and development professionals and, where and when necessary, we will strengthen our technical knowledge so we are better able to advise on the technical areas required for building resilience and for managing operational change.

We expect that this guidance will evolve over time and that it will be strengthened by the rich set of lessons learned that will emerge as we engage in implementation efforts. We are committed to systematically documenting the impact that this guidance is having on the results we are able to achieve and our operations, and will use this evidence base to refine our approach and expand the geographic focus of the implementation of this policy and program guidance. We believe that this phased approach, with an emphasis on gathering a strong evidence base to evaluate the approach outlined here, is critical to driving the results we seek.

In the end, this policy and program guidance is inspired by, and seeks to serve, the vision of resilience that has been increasingly articulated by communities affected by recurrent crisis, country governments, partners in development, and Agency staff. Through the commitments articulated here, we will continue to seek to empower those close to solutions, both within USAID and within the communities in which we work, assisting them in their efforts to facilitate change. Every day, communities around the world face recurrent crisis, chronic poverty, and extreme vulnerability. Their resilience of spirit – even in the face of these challenges – is our primary motivation for this agenda.

Selected Resources

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USAID Resources

For more information about USAID's Resilience work, please visit www.usaid.gov/resilience.

Building Resilience and Fostering Growth in the Horn of Africa, Web. <http://transition.usaid.gov/resilience/USAIDResiliencePaper.pdf>.

Ensuring Attention to Gender Issues and Women's Inclusion, Web. http://transition.usaid.gov/resilience/GenderIssuesWomensInclusion_BackgroundPaper.pdf.

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