



GREATER HORN OF AFRICA (GHA) FOOD SECURITY BULLETIN

CONTINGENCY PLANNING PROCESSES IN THE GHA REGION

INTRODUCTION

Even the best early warning system is of limited use if it does not prompt rapid and appropriate humanitarian response. A lot of effort has been put into developing early warning systems to enable forward planning in the humanitarian sector. National governments together with the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the IGAD's Climate Prediction and Application Center (ICPAC; ex-Drought Monitoring Center-Nairobi), the World Food Program (WFP) and various other partners have been deeply involved in developing and improving early warning systems and their outputs. Despite these efforts, responses from governments, donors, United Nations (UN) agencies and humanitarian partners have been often late, hastily put in place, insufficient and inappropriate. Contingency planning has proven an effective link between early warning and meaningful and timely humanitarian action. The excellent donors' response to the 2002-03 food crisis in Ethiopia, at least in terms of relief food assistance, is believed to be, to a great extent, the result of the good contingency and response planning that had taken place in the food sector.

Two types of contingency planning processes exist in the region. First, processes carried out by single organizations. Organizations such as the WFP, the Red Cross and CARE, which have been developing internal, sector-specific contingency plans as management tools. In some cases government line ministries and donors have also developed contingency plans. These efforts have proven to be effective ways of augmenting the preparedness of these organizations. Secondly, there are inter-agency contingency planning processes where different institutions collaborate to prepare for crises. This often involves UN Country Teams and their closest partners in the humanitarian sector. While international humanitarian organizations are increasingly carrying out contingency planning processes, government leadership has regrettably been absent in contingency and response processes, with a few notable exceptions such as Ethiopia and Kenya.

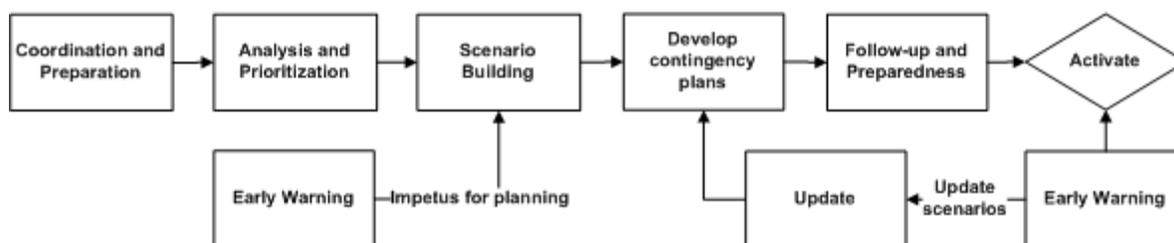
This special bulletin was prepared by FEWS NET with inputs from OCHA's Regional Support Office for Central and East Africa (OCHA-RSO-CEA) to increase awareness, highlight recent trends and promote the use of contingency planning in disaster management. The two organizations are collaborating to better and more systematically link early warning to contingency planning, which should improve preparedness as well as rapid and effective humanitarian response efforts in the region. The bulletin mainly focuses on the multi-sectoral, nation-wide contingency planning processes, as opposed to the relatively more frequent sectoral and organizational contingency planning processes.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Contingency planning is the process of establishing objectives, approaches and procedures to respond effectively to situations or events that are likely to occur, including prior identification of those events and developing likely scenarios and appropriate plans to prepare and respond to them in an effective manner¹. Essentially, a contingency plan is a management tool used to prepare for potential crises. The diagram below illustrates the main steps in a model contingency planning process.

¹ Adapted from the Inter-agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Contingency Planning for Humanitarian Assistance





First, planners prepare and organize. This includes defining the objectives and scope of the exercise, identifying potential participants, setting deadlines and assigning responsibility. When this is done, planners analyze potential crises and prioritize what they will plan for. While in many cases an emerging crisis defines the priorities, contingency planning processes can also deal with multiple hazards and their interactions. Scenarios are then developed, outlining the potential crises and their humanitarian impacts. With the scenarios as a foundation, contingency plans are prepared, defining how organizations will respond to the scenario(s), what they will need to do to implement the responses planned and how much they need to budget in order to provide those responses.

Qualities of a good contingency plan

A good Contingency Plan should:

- Be comprehensive but not too detailed
- Find a balance between flexibility and concrete plans;
- Provide guidance and direction on the intention of agencies and how to proceed
- Be well-structured, easy to read and easy to update
- Serve as layout of what will be done, by whom and when.

Source: Inter-agency Contingency Planning Guidelines (November 2001)

During the planning process, actions to improve preparedness such as collecting more information are initiated. This exercise can also be used to detect the potential gaps and limits of the disaster response strategy. The implementation of preparedness and follow-up actions are arguably the most significant benefits of contingency planning processes.

When the situation actually deteriorates into crisis, the contingency plan is activated, i.e. used to help guide humanitarian response in concert with emergency assessments. Even when a contingency plan is not used, it is important to continue the planning process and update plans to reflect changing situations. This helps maintain a heightened level of preparedness and ensure that contingency plans can be used when needed.

Early warning is an important input into contingency planning in two main ways: 1) to trigger planning when an emerging crisis is first detected; 2) to trigger activation or implementation of an existing contingency plan. In the GHA Region, recent efforts to link food security early warning to contingency planning through the Food Security Outlook Forum represent a

step forward in helping planners and decision makers identify areas where contingency planning is needed. The analyses produced in this type of forum (e.g., projections of who will be food insecure, when, where and for how long) are key inputs into scenario building especially with respect to food security.

CURRENT STATUS OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN THE REGION

The ten countries of the GHA (Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Southern Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) are currently at different levels of contingency planning practice. Overall there is good awareness of the need for contingency planning in all countries, especially among the UN Country Teams and major international organizations, donors, and NGOs. This awareness has been heightened by the work of UN Disaster Management Teams (DMT). While contingency planning, especially sectoral and single-agency, are frequent in the region, especially for UN agencies, government-led inter-agency and multi-sector contingency planning processes are less common, though some taken place only recently. While all countries in the GHA have at least recently developed their national inter-agency contingency plans, Eritrea and Somalia have not yet done so. With OCHA facilitation, Djibouti is currently developing a contingency plan.

Although changing, the food sector has dominated multi-sectoral contingency and response planning processes in the region. Two main factors account for this. First, the magnitude of food aid needs and operations in the region make contingency planning essential for food aid organizations, and second, while food aid organization have significant assessment and planning capacity, this is less true in the non food sector.

In general, government participation in contingency planning processes is weak in the GHA region (see Table 1). Contingency planning is often done by major international humanitarian organizations such as UN agencies, donors, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). National Red Cross and Crescent societies seem the only civil society or national NGO fully engaged in contingency planning processes, in line with their mandate of humanitarian assistance in case of emergencies.

Table 1: State of contingency planning in the GHA region as of December 2004

Country	Exist-ence	Government participation	Comments
Burundi	√	Weak	Contingency planning was carried out in July 2004 and covers the July - Dec 04 period. In 5 of 17 provinces, contingency plans were developed from Jan 03 to Jan 04. The level of participation was better at provincial level.
Djibouti	X		OCHA RSO-CEA is currently supporting the development of a contingency planning process.
Eritrea	X		Unclear whether a contingency plan will be developed.
Ethiopia	√	Very good	Contingency planning started in 2002. The initial phases of the exercise were food-biased, but the current multi-agency and multi-sectoral contingency plan covers all the major components of emergency preparedness and response. The plan will be regularly updated following multi-sectoral task force assessments. Taskforces are responsible for updating their respective sector's food security information.
Kenya	√	Very good	A contingency plan (actually a response plan) was developed by the Kenya Food Security Working Group (KFSWG) to deal with the 2003-04 drought. It. The KFSWG is a forum where various partners fully participate in several sectoral working groups. It is currently preparing a flood contingency plan.
Rwanda	√	Weak	Developed in September 2004. The contingency plan, to be updated every 6 months, looks very practical. Yet, a short refugee crisis that occurred last October did not prompt activation of the plan as would have been expected. This first planning process had limited Government involvement.
Somalia	X		A scenario building exercise is conducted annually, mainly to prepare the consolidated appeal. Absence of government has hampered contingency planning. A flood contingency plan was collaboratively prepared mainly by UNICEF, OCHA and FAO/SWALIM project.
Southern Sudan	√	Weak	A contingency plan for peace for southern Sudan and continued war in the Darfur was prepared under the auspices of UN agencies in May this year. The plan focuses on Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and returnees and does not show well the responses needed and how they should be best provided.
Tanzania	√	Fair	Contingency planning components are delegated to different institutions but not amalgamated in one national multi-sectoral document. The contingency planning process is not systematic.
Uganda	√	Fair	The contingency plan, drafted by WFP in 2002, covers mainly food security and only Northern Uganda. WFP updated the plan in September 2004 for 2005 but input from government and NGOs has not yet been received.

Source: Ad hoc survey conducted in Dec 2004 for this report. Most respondents were FEWS NET country representatives.

It is felt within international circles that involving some governments is not yet feasible because of the high political sensitivity of certain issues that need to be discussed during humanitarian scenarios building. However, because the aim of the inter-Agency contingency planning exercise is to support governments' efforts in disaster preparedness and response, UN agencies affirm their willingness to collaborate well with all governments when conducive conditions will be present.

Government leadership in contingency planning has been even less forthcoming due perhaps to the following reasons:

1) an absence of an emergency planning tradition in governments in the region; 2) over-emphasis on day-to-day management coupled with a reactive attitude towards disaster management; and 3) limited human and financial resources. Yet, given the primary responsibility of governments to protect and assist their populations in times of crises, contingency planning should be considered an essential tool for governments at national and sub-national levels to improve coordination, collaboration and ultimately the use of their own and external resources. While certainly imperfect and still facing constraints, a recent contingency planning process led by the Government of Ethiopia shows how this type of approach can facilitate preparedness for humanitarian crises (see first case study in Annex). Rwanda presents a more classical example of a UN agency-led multi-sectoral contingency planning process, which resulted in an operational contingency plan, despite regrettably limited government participation (see second case study).

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE REGION

Four main institutions provide significant assistance at country and at regional level to help create or strengthen disaster management institutions and contingency planning processes:

1. The UN OCHA which has offices in Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan and offices for Southern Sudan and Somalia as well as a Regional Support Office (OCHA-RSO-CEA) in Nairobi. The RSO-CEA has been the most active organization promoting and facilitating inter-agency contingency planning in the region, including through regular scenario development workshops. These workshops provide fora for sharing information and opinions about emergent humanitarian situations as well as appropriate responses. The workshops have mainly attracted international humanitarian partners, though IGAD and the African Union have been often represented and the Government of Kenya took part in the November 2004 workshop. OCHA has facilitated and supported contingency planning in individual countries, including Rwanda and Burundi, and is providing support to planned processes in Kenya, Uganda and Djibouti.
2. The Nairobi-based UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Disaster Recovery (BCPR), established in February 2003, assists in the creation or strengthening of government disaster management institutions in the countries of the region. BCPR works with OCHA to assist contingency planning processes.
3. ICPAC (ex-Drought Monitoring Center-Nairobi), in collaboration with national meteorological services, provides climate-related analyses and forecasts for use in scenario building, especially with respect to food insecurity and rainfall-dependent epidemics such as malaria and rift valley fever.
4. FEWS NET with the support of US Geological Survey (USGS) also supports contingency planning in the region, working with food security and early warning networks providing technical assistance to contingency planning processes, especially in scenario building and early warning. Working with ICPAC, the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction at Columbia University and other partners, FEWS NET facilitated in August 2004 the first Food Security Outlook Forum (FSOF) to help improve food security analysis and its usefulness. FSOF aims to assist country-level food security networks to refine scenarios for contingency planning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report focused on interagency, multi-sectoral contingency planning processes, which were shown to be at early development stages in the GHA region. Various other forms of complementary contingency planning (sectoral, agency-specific, at sub-national level, community based, quasi-contingency planning processes such as intervention plans...) which are found in the region are concerned by this section. Although no sweeping generalizations should be made, as humanitarian contexts, institutional set ups and current practice often differ, the following recommendations can be made to improve contingency planning processes in the GHA:

- Despite often pressing on-going emergency operation activities in many organizations or government departments, contingency planning should be recognized as an invaluable tool in risk management. Therefore, a greater

commitment to the process and investments in terms of time and financial resources should be made to support this activity.

- Participation should be improved. On one hand, the international humanitarian community should involve local communities, the civil society and Governments. On the other hand, Governments should participate as equal partner and, in the long-term, lead contingency planning processes. However, they should also be more open to discussions and tolerant of divergent opinions, especially at scenario building stages, to ensure credibility and sustainability of the process.

- Regularly updated, contingency plans should be activated as soon as the preset levels of trigger mechanisms are reached.

- Preventive measures should be integrated in the contingency plans and implemented in order to prevent emerging conditions from developing into crises and to increase the resilience of vulnerable populations.

- Analysis and planning in the non-food sectors (health, water, education, etc.) should be improved so that appropriate non-food interventions are included in contingency plans and responses.

- All available expertise should be utilized. This expertise exists in the region, within the specialized organizations mentioned in the report and within national institutions having acquired more experience in contingency planning processes.

SELECTED REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING

Inter-agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance

at <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/lib.nsf/WebPubDocs/3A55E4CD762756ECC1256C5A004B7793>
or at www.fews.net/planning

WFP Contingency Planning Guidelines at

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/lib.nsf/WebPubDocs/0EF58DDF03994132C1256C7C003B0B4C>
or at www.fews.net/planning

Contingency Planning for Emergencies: A Manual for Local Government Units (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) at

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/lib.nsf/WebPubDocs/5221A6A2E0F3E415C1256DB9002BCC6E>

Contingency Planning Guidelines: A Practical Guide for Field Staff (UNHCR) at

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/lib.nsf/WebPubDocs/6706926D7CCC50BAC1256D2F004C743A>

The inter-agency contingency plans and sectoral plans currently available in the GHA (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Southern Sudan) can be obtained through OCHA-RSO-CEA or by making a request to FEWS NET at GHAbulletin@fews.net

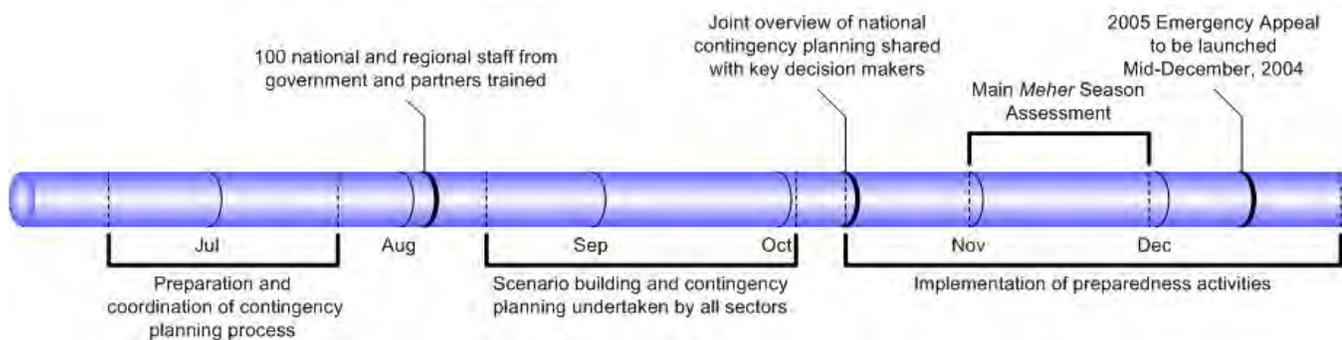
ANNEX: CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Ethiopia 2004/05 contingency planning process

In 2004, the Government of Ethiopia led a multi-agency and multi-sector contingency planning process aimed at ensuring preparedness for emergency needs in 2005. This process was conducted under the auspices of the existing national emergency coordination mechanism, namely the Crisis Management Group and the Emergency Taskforces for Early Warning (food aid), Agriculture and Livestock, Health and Nutrition, and Water and Environmental Sanitation. The process included extensive consultation and coordination between government agencies (at federal and regional levels), donors, NGOs and UN agencies, training of national and regional government, NGO and UN staff, field assessments, analysis of baseline data, consensus scenario development and contingency planning. FEWS NET provided technical assistance through the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) to support the process.

The results of the process included contingency plans for each sector, a consolidated national contingency plan and the anticipated humanitarian needs for each sector and scenario. This consolidated plan has been used as an internal working document and tool to facilitate preparedness and discussions of key issues related to potential emergency needs in 2005 – which for the first time in 2005 will be complementary to the productive safety net program – a longer term effort to address chronic food insecurity in Ethiopia and will target about 5.1 million chronically food insecure Ethiopians next year.

Figure 2: Multi-sector 2004/05 contingency planning process



The contingency planning process in Ethiopia also mapped the areas of the country most at risk including agricultural areas expecting poor production and pastoral areas suffering from drought. The plan made allowance in some cases for mitigation activities such as livestock off-take (destocking). The process also constituted a good opportunity for methodological development for assessments, especially in the non-food sectors that traditionally are inadequately addressed in the contingency and response planning process in Ethiopia.

Case Study 2: Rwanda 2004 contingency planning process

Given Rwanda's geo-political influence in the region and recent volatility linked to the political transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), members of the UN country team felt the need to develop a comprehensive inter-agency contingency plan. UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Response (BCPR) had recently worked along with the Rwanda Government to develop a national disaster management plan and this process resulted in recommendations that contingency planning be done for the possible spillover effects of the fragile transition in the DRC.

UNHCR took the lead in pushing for an inter-agency contingency planning process. A series of meetings was planned to endorse this idea, first with the UN Security Management Team, which then appointed a core group of UN agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, and UNDP), World Vision, the GTZ and the Red Cross. Further consultations were held with the international humanitarian community and with donors.

As a result, a contingency planning workshop was organized. Relevant planning documents were identified and disseminated ahead of the workshop so that core group members could see what had been done by individual agencies in

Rwanda and in countries where contingency plans have been developed. The workshop itself had broad participation from the UN, donors, international NGOs and ICRC. It focused on the main elements of contingency planning. During the deliberations, possible scenarios were developed, triggers for the execution of the plan were set and a plan for “who does what, where and when” was laid out in a simple and useful matrix. For example, one trigger warranting the activation of the plan would be the arrival of refugees from a neighboring country at a rate of 300 - 400 per day over a seven-day period. If this or any other scenario were to occur, the contingency plan will be activated by the UN Resident Coordinator who within 24 hours must, among other tasks, seek from the Prime Minister’s Office confirmation of an official Government Crisis Management Focal Point. This unfortunately did not happen when in last October the influx of refugees from Burundi was developing into a potential crisis, (the number had reached a total of 3,000 people at the end of the crisis) and these trigger thresholds were reportedly reached.

Following the workshop, sectoral response plans were to be developed, though unfortunately many were not. These plans were to be attached to the National Inter-Agency Contingency Plan for Rwanda as annexes. Overall, the process, which took two months, enabled actors in Rwanda to improve working relationships, establish procedures and agreements in case of a crisis and generally improve the preparedness of all involved to respond to humanitarian crises in Rwanda

More on the GHA Food Security Bulletin

This bulletin draws from the FEWS NET regular monthly reports, with additional contributions from network partners whose names and logos appear at the bottom of the first page. Please consult <http://www.fews.net> for in-depth analysis of the countries where FEWS NET has a national representative: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Southern Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The World Food Programme provides the information on Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and northern Sudan.

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