



BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR FOOD & NUTRITION SECURITY

HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THE 2020 CONFERENCE

Resilience building is the current, not the bridge, that must run through preparedness, response, recovery, and development interventions if we are to sustainably create resilient individuals, communities, and nations.

—ERTHARIN COUSIN, WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

A barrage of shocks—both natural and human-caused—has taken a toll on food and nutrition security in recent years. Droughts, flooding, earthquakes, financial crises, food price volatility, and conflict have especially affected the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, and there is no indication that such shocks will end or diminish anytime soon. In fact, with climate change, some shocks may increase in frequency and intensity. This string of shocks raises an urgent question: How can we get better at anticipating, preventing, coping with, and recovering from shocks?

In May 2014, with the concept of resilience gaining traction in the development community, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and its 2020 Vision Initiative held an international conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The conference, “Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security,” brought together 800 people from many fields and sectors to consider what resilience means; what shocks we can expect in the coming years; how we can measure and build resilience; and, as the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals draws near, how we can incorporate resilience into the post-2015 development agenda.

BUILDING RESILIENCE FROM THE GROUND UP

What does “resilience” mean in the context of development? One definition identifies it as the capacity at the global, regional, national, community, household, and individual levels to ensure that adverse stressors and shocks do not have long-lasting negative development consequences. It is also argued, however, that “resilience” should mean the capacity not only to bounce back, but also to get ahead. Given that normal conditions for the poor are often dire, people need the capacity to transform and improve after a shock rather than merely returning to a dismal original state. When resilience goes beyond recovery to include a capacity for transformation, it may involve changes in economic, social, and ecological structures that allow for greater long-term well-being. This capacity for transformation is especially important in terms of food and nutrition security, given that more than 800 million people still suffer from chronic hunger.

Building resilience is crucial at the global, national, and community levels, but it is important to note that shocks at these levels are transmitted to households and individ-



uals, whose resilience must be primary. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—many of which are heavily involved in responding to emergencies and shocks as well as in more recent efforts to link humanitarian activities with development activities—have been leading resilience work on the ground and can offer many insights to development researchers and practitioners.

In the wider development community, however, the resilience concept has not been universally embraced. Some argue that resilience should be coupled with other concepts such as sustainability and vulnerability. Others say that a focus on resilience may overlook some causes of vulnerability and shocks, including political and macroeconomic factors, among others. Resilience may also involve trade-offs when substantial resources are employed to help people recover from short-term shocks and emergencies, diverting resources that could be put to work for longer-term development. In some cases, short-term resilience may impede long-term adaptation and transformation in the face of changing circumstances. It is also important to consider the opportunity cost of investing in resilience. The goal should be to optimize resilience in light of risks, not to maximize it in all cases.

The task of building resilience must start with people and communities themselves. Policies and programs do not arrive in a vacuum; instead, they evolve from existing systems for managing resources and mechanisms for coping with shocks, some of which have been in operation for centuries. Therefore, attempts to improve resilience should not crowd out existing mechanisms that work well. Even people who are, by definition, poor have certain resources and capacities they can bring to bear to improve their own well-being.

Still, some groups are more vulnerable than others. Particular groups may be excluded from markets, social protection programs, asset ownership, political decision-making, and other services and activities that others enjoy. This exclusion—which may be based on gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic group, or other factors—increases their vulnerability and reduces their resilience. Smallholder farmers, for example, may lack access to many goods and services, such as inputs, credit, and market services, that could improve their resilience to shocks. Furthermore, men and women in the same household may face quite different risks and adopt different coping strategies in response to shocks. Women are at particular risk of malnutrition and maternal mortality; they are more likely than men to reduce their food consumption in response to a shock that affects their household.

Among the ideas for improving the resilience of vulnerable and excluded people are the following:

- Stop seeing vulnerable and excluded people as passive

actors in development; instead, promote their active participation in planning and implementing interventions and policies.

- Link humanitarian activities to development actions, and adopt a longer timeframe for funding and interventions to help solidify improvements in well-being and resilience.
- Empower vulnerable and excluded people by ensuring their access to the same productive resources that others receive, including credit, extension services, and agricultural inputs for smallholder farmers.
- Understand existing coping mechanisms, collective action, social capital arrangements, and location-specific knowledge—then build on them.
- Use partnerships to engage civil society, and encourage collaboration between agencies and institutions.
- Invest more in monitoring and evaluating policies and programs through a resilience lens.

COPING WITH A WORLD OF SHOCKS

Among the shocks we can anticipate are climate change, conflict and displacement, food price spikes, natural disasters, and health shocks. But the range of possible shocks that pose threats to food and nutrition security is not static. Some shocks are evolving and becoming more frequent or intense, such as extreme weather events. At the same time, new shocks may emerge, such as significant sea-level rise; novel threats to human, plant, and animal health; and others that we have not yet identified. We need to better understand and predict where significant shocks may arise so that we can better prepare and improve our resilience.

Some shocks, such as weather events, price spikes, agriculture- and food-related epidemics, and conflict increase the volatility of food systems at global, regional, national, and even community levels. Others, such as health and income shocks, strike households and individuals. These two types of shocks—systemic and individual—require different instruments at different scales.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Although the global community has expressed a goal of keeping the global average temperature increase under 2 degrees Celsius, the world is on track to exceed that threshold, perhaps by a significant margin. This means more frequent and severe shocks, more stresses on agricultural systems, and greater challenges to resilience. The poorest households tend to live in areas with degraded land, highly variable weather, and frequent weather shocks. These households

also often have low rates of adopting sustainable land management practices and coping actions after weather shocks like floods and droughts.

At the same time, there are opportunities to mitigate climate change and increase resilience through “climate-smart” farming practices and other measures—many of which have already been adopted at a small scale and have significant potential if they can be expanded. Promoting resilience to climate change through sustainable land management and climate-smart agriculture will require

- expanding research and extension services to increase tolerance to stresses like heat waves, droughts, floods, salinity, pests, and diseases;
- introducing new technologies that can save water and energy and enhance nutrition;
- promoting social capital;
- improving land tenure;
- facilitating a diversity of livelihoods and crop choices; and
- improving access to markets.

More broadly, other approaches to coping with climate change include the following:

- Adopt solutions that are interdisciplinary, cost-effective, and community-based.
- Keep farmers central in the process of building resilience to climate change.
- Consider payments for ecosystem services and access to carbon credits.
- Encourage governments to design investment portfolios for different time horizons, assuming and promoting a culture of prevention.
- Promote biodiversity by encouraging conservation measures and building seed systems for crops and their wild relatives as repositories of genes.

African Republic, and undernourishment of 70 percent of its population. In South Sudan, 3.7 million people are in acute need of food.

When conflicts lead to large-scale movements of refugees, they can have complex effects in neighboring countries. The range of effects of refugee movements on food security, markets for labor and goods, and the environment is not well understood. Improving resilience in the context of conflicts and displacement could involve the following:

- Adopt a multidisciplinary and participatory approach to resilience building in humanitarian situations, bringing together local communities, governments, researchers, development practitioners, and humanitarian workers to design multisectoral approaches.
- Invest in research and development to learn more about community-level coping mechanisms, to shed light on the effects of conflict on both refugees and host countries, and to inform policy options that incorporate risk management.
- Link humanitarian assistance to development efforts, and strike a better balance between providing food aid and facilitating longer-term resilience to help limit the effects of shocks in the future.
- Support locally initiated coping mechanisms that contribute to community resilience even in the midst of conflict and displacement.

FOOD PRICE SPIKES

Food price spikes have also affected food and nutrition security in recent years. Whereas food prices over the 20th century showed a declining long-term trend, since 2007 world food prices have spiked several times. The world is particularly vulnerable to food price spikes now because export markets for staple commodities are highly concentrated, stocks of maize and wheat have been at historically low levels, and timely information on food production and

Resilience is built through partnership-based approaches that respect the dignity of the recipients, foster ownership, and ensure sustainability.

—KANAYO NWANZE, INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT

Across the globe, 1.5 billion people now live in conflict areas. Conflict and the associated displacement destroy the physical and human capital that allows for a healthy food system and resilient communities. In some cases, denying access to food is used as a tool of war. The Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, suffers from ongoing conflict, a huge influx of refugees from the neighboring Central

stocks is lacking. Prices of food and fossil fuels have become linked in international markets, and significant shares of food crops have been diverted for use as biofuel feedstock. High and volatile food prices have been blamed for raising domestic consumer prices and reducing food consumption among net food buyers in developing countries.

Among the global, regional, and national strategies that can help prevent and cope with food price spikes are the following:



- Create and maintain efficient and well-regulated futures and exchange markets for commodities to help farmers and other agents mitigate and hedge against risks.
- Design efficient stock management strategies to ensure adequate stocks at regional levels to enhance risk sharing and diversification.
- Adjust biofuel mandates to reduce competition between food and fuel uses.
- Use social protection mechanisms to help protect the most vulnerable people.
- Implement policies that enhance openness to international trade.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural disasters such as hurricanes, tsunamis, and floods raise the need for government responses at all levels. Asia is particularly vulnerable to certain sudden-onset disasters, such as cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, and floods. In recent years such disasters have affected Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, and the Philippines, among others.

For disasters that occur frequently and are somewhat predictable, such as floods and typhoons, it is more cost-effective to build resilience by managing risks and not just responses. The experience in the wake of 2013's Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines showed the importance of planning for risks and disasters, including all relevant actors, and investing in disaster readiness. For unpredictable and extreme events, the priorities are to improve both mitigation measures that reduce impacts and loss of life and systems for rapid and effective emergency response.

The aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, points to the need for a phased approach in which the most urgent recovery needs such as housing and cleanup are met first; more complex needs such as infrastructure and capacity building are met next; and longer-term needs for economic development and disaster risk reduction are met third. It is important to allocate resources for this third phase so that it is not left out. At the same time, experiences in some countries have shown that recovery from disaster can offer a real opportunity to build resilience at the community level by strengthening institutions and natural resource management systems. The 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China, served as the impetus for the passage of an emergency response law and the drafting of national emergency plans.

Options for increasing resilience in the context of natural disasters include the following:

- Build capacity for disaster response not only at the regional and national levels, but also at the local level, where the frontline response takes place.
- Manage risks rather than disasters, starting with a plan informed by science, technology, and updated climate statistics and including community-level education campaigns.
- Adopt a phased approach to disaster recovery, in which the first phase focuses on speed, the second phase on quality, and the third phase on sustainability.
- Improve coordination and integration among different levels and actors, such as national and local governments, NGOs, and civil society.

- Consider establishing national post-disaster reconstruction funds with flexible financing instruments.
- Use shocks to innovate and build new systems and institutions that will increase resilience to future disasters.

HEALTH SHOCKS

At the household level, health shocks are often a key factor driving people into poverty. Even small shocks, such as illness or accidents, can lead to food and nutrition insecurity for households. Well-off households can fall into a “medical poverty trap,” in which they are impoverished by the combination of ill health and indebtedness from high health care costs. Everyday emergencies such as chronic malnutrition, especially of young children, can have drastic lifelong effects on productivity, cognitive functioning, and health. Building resilience to these shocks will involve providing health care services, health insurance, and regulation of health care, as well as consistently meeting the nutritional needs of mothers and young children.

At a larger scale, history suggests that the planet faces a continuing risk of epidemic and even pandemic shocks. With large-scale movements of people—due to conflict, climate change, or other factors—the risk of epidemic increases. It is important to strengthen not only early warning and public health systems but also agricultural systems and practices in order to improve the safety of food and water supplies.

Options for dealing with health shocks include the following:

- Build human capacity at the individual and group levels, including strengthening basic health systems and increasing access to health care.
- Carefully balance centralized and decentralized actions, depending on the type of shock and local capacity.
- Use affordable health insurance as a key component of an effective health system.
- Introduce mechanisms to ensure food safety.
- Focus on enabling health delivery systems rather than specific interventions or actions.
- Take local context and knowledge into account when designing response frameworks.

CREATING FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO RESILIENCE

The world’s food system has become increasingly integrated. Shocks at the global, regional, and national levels are transmitted to communities and households through trade, prices, agriculture- and food-related diseases, and other channels. It is thus essential to predict, prevent, and mitigate shocks to the food system at multiple levels.

Food and nutrition security are, in themselves, important elements of individual resilience, but they can also enhance the resilience of whole economies by enhancing the health and productivity of individuals. At the same time, food and agricultural systems themselves need to be resilient to shocks, both large and small, to help preserve food availability and access even when disaster strikes. How can we create a food and agricultural system that contributes to human resilience through food and nutrition security and is itself resilient to shocks? One proposal, borrowing from the banking industry, is to subject food systems to a stress test that would identify the main features to be protected, assess risks that could threaten those features, and prescribe remedial measures.

Resilience in terms of food and nutrition security requires a flexible diversity of sources of accessible and affordable nutritious foods. Achieving this diverse food supply will demand that we go beyond a narrow focus on a few staple commodities. As we redesign agricultural systems, it is important to start by asking not “What foods can grow in this area?” but “What foods and nutrition does this population need, and how can we generate them?” This may offer opportunities for tapping into local knowledge. Consumer education and well-functioning markets will also play an important role here.

Farmers are central to a resilient food and agricultural system that, in turn, begets a resilient population; in other words, raising agricultural growth and farmers’ incomes will increase the resilience not only of the farmers themselves but also of society at large by providing a stable buffer against shocks. Smallholder farmers in particular produce a large share of the world’s food but, in many cases, lack the tools to increase production in ways that help their own families and food consumers. New farming technologies and better-functioning markets can help move smallholder farmers away from subsistence, but this process needs to account for small-scale farmers’ needs by involving them in planning, implementing, measuring, and monitoring programs.

Among other things, smallholder farmers urgently need access to diverse modern seeds, financing and credit, and

markets for inputs and outputs. Governments and donors should invest more in expanding agricultural research and extension, building infrastructure, and promoting modern climate-smart technologies. Agricultural research and development must also shift from a narrow focus on yields to a broader focus on other important crop characteristics, such as nutritional value; tolerance to stresses like heat, drought, and salt; water and energy efficiency; and low greenhouse gas emissions. Most public and private

to use, and at what scale are still being debated. Resilience can be considered at the individual, community, regional, national, and global levels—how can we measure capabilities for dealing with shocks at these various scales? What concrete indicators of resilience have the most diagnostic and predictive power?

Researchers are working to address these questions and clarify ways of measuring resilience. For example, the Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group seeks

For us, anticipating, adapting to, and recovering from shocks are essential to our future.

—HAILEMARIAM DESSALEGN, PRIME MINISTER, ETHIOPIA

agricultural research has focused on a few main crops while neglecting many of the crops and products important to smallholders, such as millet, sorghum, horticultural crops, and livestock.

Much of the investment required to expand food supplies will need to come from the private sector. Private companies can invest in innovative technologies and services that will help smallholder farmers—for example, seeds that are drought tolerant, mobile phones that can connect farmers with markets, improved fertilizers, mechanization equipment and services, and rural advisory and extension services. The exact solutions in different locations must be designed with the participation of local people. Private companies, working in partnership with other sectors, must seek profitable and sustainable models for agricultural production of nutritious foods.

A resilient food system must also include mechanisms for preventing agriculture-related health hazards and improving food safety. Resilient food production depends on a resilient natural resource base, so the agricultural system must be designed with long-term sustainability in mind. Free and fair trade is key to moving food from surplus to deficit countries or regions when needed, but global and regional reserves are also crucial.

MEASURING RESILIENCE

Policymakers and development practitioners are eager for guidelines on how to measure resilience as a way to help them design policies and programs more effectively, to know how well those policies and programs are contributing to resilience, and to serve as early warning systems for emerging shocks. The issue of measurement is still, however, in its infancy. Questions of what to measure, whom to measure, how often to measure, what methods

to hammer out a set of criteria to help users determine whether they are using valid indicators of resilience. The group has proposed a broad framework in which resilience is measured as a set of capacities in relation to risks and shocks as well as in relation to development outcomes. The group's work suggests that sound measures will need to include a clear definition of resilience, detailed and accurate measurement of shocks, integration of various methodologies, measurement over longer periods of time, consideration of multilevel systems, attention to the appropriate temporal scale, and targeting of the appropriate population (such as vulnerable women and children).

Experience with previous measures of resilience offers insights into what works. Helen Keller International has been a leader in using nutritional surveillance in Bangladesh to support long-term aid and planning, to help monitor and assess the impacts of programs, and to provide early warning of the impacts of shocks. This high-frequency surveillance of nutrition status at representative sentinel sites across the country captured the impacts of short-term shocks like flooding and allowed for timely responses.

Environmental variables, drawn from satellite data for example, can also be useful for understanding both the causes and consequences of shocks. Such indicators can be used to measure drivers of shocks (for example, the impact of high temperature on yields), sensitivity to shocks (for example, the effects of population growth on water balance), and buffering capacity (for example, biodiversity).

While contexts vary, some standardization of indicators is needed. However, there is growing agreement that no single set of indicators will adequately capture resilience. The appropriate frequency of data collection is also a subject of intense discussion. Some variables and geographic areas may require more or less frequent collection of data than others.

One proposal for measuring resilience consists of setting

up sentinel sites in global hotspots that are highly vulnerable to shocks. Surveys of these sentinel sites would need to be frequent enough to capture the effects of locally

We've got to be able to distinguish between which factors really make a difference to resilience under what conditions and, equally important, which don't.

—JON KURTZ, MERCY CORPS

relevant shocks and the coping mechanisms people adopt in response.

Collecting new data is costly, however, and some argue that it is important to make better use of existing data by disaggregating and reintegrating them in more useful ways. Publicly available data on many indicators have already been collected, and more robust analysis could yield important insights. There is also still a great need to build human capacity to monitor and use the data that is being collected.

Overall, producing evidence at a scale that can influence decisions about major resilience investments will require donors and policymakers to demand stronger measurement of resilience and support coordinated research. In addition, researchers must settle on metrics and methods, and NGOs and agencies need to use compatible methods to test major assumptions.

PROMOTING RESILIENCE REGION BY REGION

HORN OF AFRICA

The severe drought that hit the Horn of Africa in 2011 brought the concept of resilience to the forefront of the development agenda. This region faces not only droughts, but also land degradation, climate change, and stagnant agricultural productivity. Although various investments have been made in the region—including famine early warning systems and Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme—it became clear that improving resilience in the Horn of Africa will require a number of steps. Governments and development partners in the region will need to summon the political will, supported by ample funding, to help people become less vulnerable to shocks. Actions to improve resilience in the region include the following:

- Establish clear response mechanisms to accompany early

warning systems. For example, governments in the region should set up national drought contingency funds.

- Design programs to meet community needs, emphasizing community participation and management.
- Promote sustainable livelihoods in the drylands, including support for pastoralists' mobility and access to rangelands.
- Learn from past failures, and scale up best practices that are already underway.
- Increase private-sector involvement in areas such as financial services, especially for the poor, to help them build up assets and protect against shocks.
- Invest in strengthening education, job training, health care, and other contributors to human capacity in the region.

SAHEL

People in the Sahel suffer not only from serious shocks, such as drought, but also from minor shocks and constant underlying stressors that impede their ability to improve their well-being. The goal is long-term ecological equilibrium, in which natural resources are not only conserved but regenerated to help cope with stressors.

As in the Horn of Africa, water scarcity in the Sahel is a recurring problem that has led to repeated food crises. Water management will be key to improving resilience for food and nutrition security in the region. Some work has taken place to build stronger water management systems in the Sahel, but more investment is needed to support sustainable water management and irrigation for both farmers and pastoralists. Water management can raise thorny governance issues, but this task will become more and more crucial as climate change advances, bringing with it potential changes in temperature and rainfall.

Although the region already has some institutions designed to reduce risk and cope with shocks, more needs to be done to increase resilience in the Sahel and create a broader enabling environment that is conducive to agricultural growth. Among the steps for doing so are the following:

- Improve risk management by strengthening information systems, drawing on geographic, socioeconomic, and agricultural surveys.
- Enhance vulnerable people's access to markets so they can build up their assets.
- Given the large role women play in subsistence agriculture in the region, ensure that their concerns are taken into account when designing agricultural policies and programs.

- Expand and strengthen extension systems to better connect research and technologies to farmers.
- Increase public support for large-scale fortification of food staples (such as flour and cooking oil) to help provide micronutrients to vulnerable populations.

ARAB WORLD

The Arab world is a heterogeneous region that includes (1) rich oil exporters that are vulnerable to food supply shocks, (2) middle-income countries that are vulnerable to food supply and price shocks, and (3) poor countries that are vulnerable to food supply and price shocks and hunger. The region is also vulnerable to climate change, which is contributing to the emergence of new zoonotic and plant diseases and exacerbating water scarcity. Youth unemployment is the highest in the world, at 27 percent in the Middle East and 29 percent in North Africa. Conflict—both a cause of food insecurity and a consequence of it—as well as fragile institutions and a weakened social contract have hampered the development of governance systems that contribute to resilience.

Improving resilience in the Arab world is a complex multidimensional task that is too big for one development or government agency. It will require complementary and integrative partnerships among various levels of government, the private sector, civil society, community groups, and international agencies. Actions include the following:

- As an important first step, pursue political and social reforms that include all members of the population.
- Go beyond responding to crises, and use evidence to formulate inclusive national and regional development plans.

- Build strong information systems to help establish early warning systems, identify vulnerable populations, set priorities for resilience, and increase responsiveness to shocks.
- Promote private-sector investment to help create jobs for unemployed and underemployed young people.

SOUTH ASIA

South Asia not only is subject to weather and climate shocks but also faces an ongoing crisis of undernutrition. By diminishing human capacity, the region's high rate of undernutrition impedes growth and resilience at the national, community, household, and individual levels. Although countries in the region face some common challenges, they are also characterized by a diversity of ecological, demographic, and social conditions.

Among the ideas for helping those in South Asia prepare for and cope with shocks are the following:

- Improve forecasting of risks (such as weather and food price shocks), and disseminate relevant information widely once it is available.
- Take a more inclusive, human-centered, systems approach to developing policies and programs. For example, farmers, women, and other marginalized groups need to be better represented in policy and program design.
- Strengthen social protection programs, such as cash transfer and school feeding programs, in ways that contribute to better nutrition.
- Establish closer connections between agriculture and nutri-



tion by strengthening value chains—from farmers to processors to retailers to consumers—and designing them to maximize nutrition from the outset. This is an area where the public and private sectors may work well together.

- Expand access to clean drinking water and sanitation.
- Balance national food self-sufficiency goals with the need for more regional trade and cooperation, which can improve resilience during localized food supply shocks.

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Although food-borne diseases and public health shocks have hit East Asia and the Pacific repeatedly, these shocks tend to receive relatively little attention compared with higher-profile shocks like natural disasters and climate change. Nonetheless, they have serious impacts on food and nutrition security in the region.

Food-borne diseases and public health shocks have a number of sources, including epidemics such as avian influenza, inappropriate irrigation and fertilization practices, poor application of chemical fertilizers, and contamination of food along the supply chain. The challenge of reducing contamination and disease crosses value-chain stages (from farmers to consumers), sectors, and boundaries.

There are a number of options for building resilience to these shocks:

- Improve cross-sector coordination, given that the issues of food-borne diseases and public health shocks fall within the scope of many actors.
- Strengthen capacity building—that is, education, information, and training—at all levels, from farmers to food processors to government officials.
- Strengthen regulation of food safety standards, including formulation of policies and regulations, investment in human capacity to enforce these regulations, and a commitment to monitoring the effectiveness of and compliance with regulations.
- Generate better-quality data and information on risks and possible solutions.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY, INSTITUTIONS, AND GOVERNANCE

The building blocks of resilience are the systems and institutions that can help people prepare for and adapt to shocks. NGOs have long been at the forefront of the effort to build resilience because they operate at the intersection of humanitarian relief and long-term development, but other kinds of institutions and organizations are becoming increasingly relevant.

National governments can have enormous impacts on the resilience of their citizens. For example, national investment priorities with regard to education and health, infrastructure, economic and trade policies, food reserve arrangements, and safety nets have profound implications for the ability of individuals, households, and communities to cope with shocks and to become better off. Given the regularity with which some types of shocks cross national boundaries, regional and global institutions can also serve as important buffers against the worst effects of serious shocks.

In many developing countries, institutions are weak or missing. An important step in strengthening institutions for resilience, therefore, is building their capacity in ways that allow them to help people anticipate, deal with, and recover from shocks. This capacity building needs to take place at individual, community, and systemwide levels.

At the same time, addressing multifaceted problems like resilience for food and nutrition security requires the participation of multiple stakeholders, such as different government ministries. While managing such multidisciplinary, multisectoral processes is challenging given participants' diverse backgrounds and objectives, it is also crucial to successful resilience building.

Strong and sound institutions can help overcome political inertia and allow for carrying out plans that extend beyond the terms of political officials. Building the capacity of institutions means creating the capability to anticipate, prepare for, and deal with both short- and long-term shocks. It involves addressing local needs and listening to local clients. Because institutions need to be agile to operate successfully in a dynamic environment, they must be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. Building institutional capacity also requires investing in resources and incentives to train and retain qualified employees and participants.

Well-functioning institutions can make good use of data to monitor and evaluate policies and programs, but in many developing countries reliable statistics—and especially statistics on agriculture—are in short supply. Building statistical capacity is thus another element in strengthening institutions for resilience.

More broadly, governance is a somewhat amorphous concept that describes the effectiveness not only of governments at multiple levels, but also of other organizations and institutions, such as civil society and the private sector. Failures of governance on the part of these actors can lead to the kinds of shocks that threaten the resilience of communities and individuals, whereas effective governance can help improve resilience. Elements of good governance include active participation, access to information, capacity for effective action, responsiveness, partnerships, and

accountability. Preparing for and responding to shocks—anticipated and unanticipated—requires information on risks and other factors as well as participation by all relevant actors. It also depends on the capabilities of institutions at different levels—from international and regional to national and local—and their capacity to work seamlessly with one another. Responsiveness consists of actions designed to prevent or mitigate shocks, but it can be exceedingly

opment goals with planet-centered sustainability goals. A resilience agenda could serve as the impetus to a commitment in the development community to eliminate emergencies that arise from recurrent shocks such as drought.

Clearly, improving resilience for food and nutrition security will require better data and information on risks and responses, better approaches to monitoring and measuring

Outside interventions that ignore the social institutions and arrangements that support collective action are likely to displace them, and can even create dependencies that reduce resilience.

—RUTH MEINZEN-DICK, INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

difficult in a highly dynamic environment. Given the complexity of resilience, partnerships among many actors are essential but require extensive management capacity.

Finally, robust mechanisms are needed to ensure that institutions are accountable to affected communities for how they set priorities, allocate resources, and implement programs. It is important to find ways to ensure accountability over the long term, especially when decisionmakers may have moved on from their positions of power.

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE POST-2015 WORLD

Resilience is primarily about developing capabilities at all levels—individual, household, community, national, and regional—to deal with all kinds of shocks. It also represents a systems approach, with all of the complexity that that implies. It is about ensuring a healthy, sustainable global food system that can provide nutritious food for all without damaging the planet. A “resilience lens” is a way of looking at issues across the food system—including smallholder production, food processing, markets and trade, food stocks, agriculture-related diseases, food safety, social safety nets, and nutrition interventions—with an eye toward their role in resilience building. It implies a more holistic approach to development interventions. Yet it is important to remember that people are at the foundation of any system, and building the capacity of a system means building the capacity of the individuals within it.

As the development community considers how to frame the post-2015 development agenda in the wake of the Millennium Development Goals, resilience may fit into this agenda in several ways. Resilience could be a natural overarching theme of post-2015 goals, encompassing poverty eradication, food security, and nutrition security. It could also be seen as a way of connecting people-centered devel-

opment goals with planet-centered sustainability goals. A resilience agenda could serve as the impetus to a commitment in the development community to eliminate emergencies that arise from recurrent shocks such as drought.

- Governments need to create an enabling environment for resilience that includes, among other things, disaster preparedness, safety nets, education and healthcare, infrastructure, and agricultural investment.
- Communities and civil society organizations need to demand the tools for greater resilience.
- NGOs need to do more to link humanitarian and development actions and measure resilience to strengthen monitoring and evaluation.
- The private sector needs to look at resilience as a business proposition and provide goods and services, especially innovative financing and insurance instruments, that contribute to resilience.
- Researchers need to improve their understanding of resilience and how to measure it by, among other things, settling on the concept, theory, and implications of resilience; looking at new methods and tools for modeling risks; identifying resilience success stories; and improving the evidence base on resilience in ways that are useful for development practitioners.

Looking ahead to a future of continuing and even increasing shocks, we will need to get better at finding ways to cope—and ideally to thrive—in the presence of shocks. Achieving food and nutrition security for all will not be possible if each shock pushes people into poverty, hunger, or malnutrition. The post-2015 agenda must incorporate the aim of eliminating both sudden and chronic food crises, even as shocks strike. Indeed, achieving the goal of ending hunger and undernutrition by 2025 demands no less.

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This synopsis presents highlights from the international conference “Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security,” organized by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and its 2020 Vision Initiative. This global policy consultation was designed to inform, influence, and catalyze action by policymakers, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, educators, researchers, and communities themselves to incorporate resilience into the post-2015 agenda and improve policies, investments, and institutions to strengthen resilience so that food and nutrition security can be achieved for all. Experts and practitioners from the resilience and vulnerability communities, as well as food and nutrition security, agriculture, humanitarian, and related development sectors came together to assess emerging shocks that threaten food and nutrition security, discuss approaches and tools for building resilience, identify knowledge and action gaps, and set priorities for action on this critical issue.

For more information on the conference and its associated activities and products, including papers and briefs, lead-up and follow-up events, videos, posters, a collaborative bibliography, and much more, go to

www.2020resilience.ifpri.info | [#2020resilience](https://twitter.com/2020resilience)

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2033 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006-1002 USA | T. +1.202.862.5600 | F. +1.202.467.4439 | ifpri@cgiar.org | www.ifpri.org

This synopsis was written by Heidi Fritschel, Rajul Pandya-Lorch, Sivan Yosef, and Laura Zselezky. It has not been subjected to the International Food Policy Research Institute's standard peer review procedure. Any opinions stated herein are those of the authors and are not necessarily representative of or endorsed by the International Food Policy Research Institute.

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