

The profiles of many countries in Africa - Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and Western and Central Africa (WCA) are characterized by multiple and compounded shocks and stressors. These severely affect the coping capacities of vulnerable people and leave existing national systems unable to cope, thus threatening hard-won development gains. In this context, resilient development, which is defined in the framework as the ability of individuals, communities and State to better prepare, manage, and recover from crises through capacity and system development, is a prerequisite for countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the targets of the African Union Agenda 2063.

In order to effectively support countries, it is critical that tools, such as **United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) and Regional Refugee Response Plans (RRPs), are adapted to respond to the high risk context in ESA and WCA regions.** For that reason, Development Assistance Frameworks across the continent and beyond use “Sustainable Development and Resilience” as a core programme principle. Beyond UNDAF, it is also key that Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) are fully equipped to support countries to better link approaches that include: (i) risk-informed programming and preparedness for emergency response; (ii) disaster risk reduction; (iii) climate change adaptation; and (iv) conflict-prevention and peace-building, while seeking to integrate humanitarian and development programming where feasible and appropriate to do so.

The purpose of this Framework is to support Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) to better adapt their programmes, tools, and staff capacity to be “fit for context”, in order to help countries and their people achieve the SDGs and targets of the Agenda 2063 through resilient development. The framework does not intend to impose standardisation of resilience initiatives or to serve as a ‘blueprint for action’. Instead, it intends to provide a conceptual framework, guidance and a compilation of tools and approaches to resilient development for Africa Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs), based on experiences within and beyond Africa.

This Framework reflects and builds on numerous existing global and regional initiatives and reference documents related to resilient development, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation. At the global level, these include: (i) Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030); (ii) Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015); (iii) UN Plan of Action \ Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience (2016); (iv) UN Climate Resilience Initiative “Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape” (2015); (v) Commitments from the World Humanitarian Summit (2016); (vi) the SDGs and the Addis

Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development; (vii) the Rome-Based Agencies’ Collaboration of Strengthening Resilience For Food Security And Nutrition (2015); and (viii) “The Challenges of Sustaining Peace”, Report of the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) on the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (2015).

❖ Why Resilient Development?

Discussions about resilience have come to the forefront in East and South Africa and West and Central Africa following severe crises in the regions’ recent history. These include: the Horn of Africa crisis in 2011-2012, which saw famine declared in Somalia and the loss of over 260,000 lives (more than half of them children); the Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in 2014 that affected some countries in western Africa; protracted conflict and recurrent violence in countries such as South Sudan, Somalia and the Central African Republic, directly affecting millions of lives; as well as COVID 19 Outbreak in 2019, which particularly devastated socioeconomic and health systems globally. The main reasons for focusing on resilient development are both contextual and programmatic:

- Multiple and compounded shocks faced by countries.
- Shocks are aggravated by chronic stressors. These include: (i) environmental degradation and sea level rises; (ii) food insecurity, volatility of food prices and chronic malnutrition; (iii) high levels of monetary and non-monetary poverty, inequality, and socioeconomic exclusion; (iv) political instability and political exclusion; (v) poor governance, fragile institutions, and limited application of disaster risk management schemes at the national and subnational levels; (vi) limited delivery and poor quality of basic social services, aggravated by increased urbanisation; (vii) tensions over exploitation and management of natural resources, particularly those that have transboundary nature; (viii) violence and conflict in some countries; (ix) high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, especially in Southern Africa; (x) influxes of migrants, (xi) social and cultural traditional norms; and (xii) patterns and practices of discrimination and human rights violations.
- Unprecedented demographic boom and dynamics mean that more people are being affected by shocks.
- Regions affected by conflict, violence and instability.
- Erratic weather, drought and climate change as a driver of conflict.
- The combination of increasing population displacement for longer periods, with relatively low numbers of displaced

populations achieving a durable solution, remains a key challenge in East and South Africa and West and Central Africa.

- Unplanned urbanisation resulting to the growth of informal settlements.
- Increasing convergence of people targeted by both humanitarian and development assistance.
- Development and humanitarian interventions largely failed to address the causes of persistent vulnerability, and at times have not be able to meet the scale of humanitarian needs.
- Communities and governments seek more effective and sustainable ways to respond to crises

❖ **Conceptualising Resilient Development**

Many definitions of 'resilience' have been put forward by the development and humanitarian communities, each with their own merits. For the purpose of this Framework, resilience is understood as the capacity of individuals, communities and institutions to anticipate, prepare for, resist, withstand, adapt to, transform and recover from crises. Put more simply, resilient development means making sure that, through inclusive systems-building and capacity development, individuals and communities have what they need to better prepare, manage and recover from crises.

Resilience is a multi-dimensional capacity that draws on a wide array of resources, including: (i) human (e.g., health and nutrition status, skills); (ii) social; (iii) economic; (iv) political and institutional; (v) programmatic (e.g., safety nets); and (vi) ecological resources. Developing resilience requires an understanding of the optimal set of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities of individuals and communities, while acknowledging that the difference between these capacities is often blurred.

Resilience programming refers to the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions that can respond to complex and interconnected risks and ensure that development gains are preserved, even during exposure to events that progressively erode the capacity of a community or system to cope (stresses).

❖ **Principles of Resilient Development**

To inform this approach, and based on the context in the East and South Africa and West and Central Africa regions, resilience programming should be informed by the following principles:

Principle 1: Take context as the starting point. It is critical to understand the particular nature of the stresses or shocks to which a state, region or community may be exposed and their potential occurrence and magnitude over time. Understanding the broader context allows actors to jointly recognise the likelihood and impact of external factors (such as climate), as well as vulnerability, capacity, or gaps in political will. It is particularly important to have a common understanding of geographic areas that require more support; which specific populations face the highest risk (broken

down by dimensions such as age or sex); existing indigenous capital; and regional and cross-border dynamics.

Principle 2: Act early to prevent. Emphasis on prevention includes sharing risk analyses and acting before shocks materialise, as well as looking beyond quick-fix solutions to address the root causes of people's vulnerability and deprivation. Act early may also prevent that one type of shock or protracted crisis results into another one. This requires medium to long-term strategies including disaster risk reduction, as well as preparedness and contingency planning.

Principle 3: Act fast, but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance. Capacity development in core institutions normally requires at least ten years. Since volatility of engagement has the potential to destabilize both institutions and communities, Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) should advocate for and support national governments' efforts to improve aid predictability, increase the duration of financial and technical support, and enhance mutual consultation and coordination prior to embarking on resilience development initiatives.

Principle 4: Focus on system-building as the central objective. The risks and vulnerability in East and South Africa and West and Central Africa regions are best addressed through developing shock-responsive and government-led systems for the delivery of public goods and services that can expand and respond to meet humanitarian needs as part of longer-term development at both the national and local levels. This should include building emergency preparedness and response mechanisms to meet acute, short-term needs, as well as more permanent systems – particularly social services, social protection systems, and safety nets.

Principle 5: Think state-building and recognise and promote government leadership. To strengthen resilience, Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) should adopt a balanced approach in its interventions, whereby they reflect the interconnections between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development and the role of the state in all of them. In that regard, HCTs should use a "whole-of government" approach to support – involving those responsible for security, political and economic affairs, as well as those responsible for development aid and humanitarian assistance – in an effort to promote coherence and government leadership.

Principle 6: Promote equitable development, equality and non-discrimination, and a human rights-based approach as the basis for inclusive, stable and resilient societies. HCTs should avoid unintentional exclusionary effects arising from a focus on "low-hanging fruit" or easy-to-reach populations. It is the poorest, most marginalised and discriminated-against communities (including refugees, migrants and the internally displaced), and other vulnerable population groups (such as children and women) who are most at risk and most likely to feel the impacts of shocks and stresses.

Principle 7: Be accountable to affected populations. HCTs should align their interventions with local priorities and tailor programmes

accordingly, avoiding “pre-packaged” 14 programming. Nobody knows better how to build resilience than communities; therefore they should not only be consulted in programme design, but actively engaged in the development, monitoring and progress review of any intervention.

Principle 8: Engage catalytic, broad-based partnerships for sustainable development. Collaborative partnerships are vital to achieving resilience. Catalytic partnerships, including the private sector and civil society, along the traditional humanitarian and development partners, are necessary to mobilise the knowledge, expertise and resources necessary for resilient development.

Principle 9: Design, test and iterate. Context is dynamic rather than static, and is constantly changing based on how individuals, households or communities deal with and respond to risks and shocks. Interventions must be designed to allow for real-time changes and improvements to programming through regular feedback and shared learning.

❖ **Strategies for Resilient Development in ESA and WCA – The HOW**

Strategies and actions for resilient development are context-specific and dependent on the technical and financial capacity and leadership of governments and partners. Of the many strategies for strengthening resilience, those described below are particularly relevant.

1. Adapting programmes to overcome risks

» **Risk-informed programming.** Risk informed programming is programming that reduces the risk (including the potential impacts) of shocks and stressors on individuals well-being, their communities and systems, contributing to resilient development, by addressing root causes and drivers or risk, including vulnerabilities and lack of capacities.

2. Building the evidence base

» **Evidence generation.** Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) should make sure that all supported programmes include strategies and tools to monitor, evaluate and analyse achievements associated with resilient development. This includes the identification and monitoring of (i) outcome indicators, to demonstrate that levels of well-being have remained stable or recovered despite a given stressor or shock, and (ii) output indicators, to demonstrate that interventions have built-in resilience elements; for example, the scalability of social service provision, or the flexibility of a social protection system in relation to a given stressor/ shock.

3. Working with the right actors

» **Placing communities at the centre of programmes.** The impact of external interventions will largely depend on the suitability of those activities to the local context, and the extent to which implementing agencies address existing social dynamics and involve community members. Due consideration

should be given to the specific hardship facing displaced people.

» **Women and girls’ empowerment.** Addressing gender disparity is a pre-requisite for resilient development. Gender and resilience are connected in a two-way causality: community-level resilience can be key to strengthening gender equality, and women’s empowerment can strengthen community resilience. To develop resilience with a gender perspective, a two-pronged programme approach is needed: (i) strengthen programmes that address specific needs of women and girls on issues such as education parity, access to land, agricultural inputs and credit schemes or sexual and reproductive health, especially family planning and maternal health; and (ii) influence gendered power relations, particularly at the community level.

» **Multi - partnerships and multi-sectoral approach.** Cross sectoral collaboration is vital to resilient development. In particular, it requires linkages between social protection, food security, livelihoods, nutrition, health, WASH, education, social services, and planning and finance.

» **Engagement in regional initiatives.** Cross-border issues and dynamics frequently require specific attention and collaboration between states. Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) should collaborate and support governments to engage in regional initiatives and strengthen regional bodies (such as the African Union and its Regional Economic Commissions, IGAD, the Economic Commission of West Africa (ECOWAS), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) that can advance regional approaches to resilient development in different contexts.

» **Advocacy and engagement with the private sector.** The impact of disasters cuts across all sectors, and in many circumstances the private sector is the hardest hit. Advocating and raising awareness of the private sector to fully commit to risk reduction and adaptation to suitable business models, can contribute to better resource, plan, and implement resilience development initiatives, and to moving the resilient development agenda beyond the boundaries of government institutions.

4. Attracting adequate funding

» **Multiyear and flexible funding.** While resilient development is about long-term development, a large proportion of resilience-related activities are funded through short time-frame humanitarian windows. Support to resilient development should compel Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) to seek increased, multi-year and flexible funding. This will allow HCTs to develop, take to scale and sustain over time programmes that can have a meaningful impact on resilience.

Reference: Strategic Framework to Support Resilient Development in Africa by the REGIONAL UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT GROUP (R-UNDG) EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (ESA) & WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA (WCA)