Cash-Based Transfers as a Front-Line Response in Countries Facing Famine

Sponsor and Organizers: Norway, WFP, CALP

Date and Time: Wednesday, 21 June 2017, 18.00 - 19.15
Room XXII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year’s theme: Restoring Humanity and Leaving No One Behind: Working together to reduce people’s humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability.

Background and objectives
Twenty million people risk starvation in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, and another 10 million people are in crisis and struggle to feed their families. Large-scale life-saving assistance is improving conditions across the famine affected countries and organizations are maximizing inter-operability by integrating multiple forms and modalities of assistance to capitalize on efficiency. Cash-based transfers (CBT) are a key component of the relief effort providing choice, reducing the sense of dependency, empowering the people assisted, and supporting the local economy.

This panel will have the following objectives:

- Explore the use of cash in the delivery of large-scale emergency assistance, including common platforms and multi-sector programming;
- Explore the operational realities of when and where cash-based assistance could be most appropriate;
- Highlight increased accountability and sharing platform innovations for beneficiary data, including cloud-based technology, digital beneficiary and transfer management platforms, biometrics, and multi-wallet features; and,
- Consider the impacts, risks, costs and benefits of cash transfers across a wide range of humanitarian contexts.

Discussion points
Against this backdrop, the side-event will focus on the following discussion points:
• Cash based transfers are a mode of humanitarian assistance: they are not an end point.
• What are the operational realities of using cash based transfer modalities for distributing resources in fragile states facing famine such as Somalia and Yemen?
• What technology and innovation options are available for digital beneficiary and transfer management platforms? How do these affect program management, costs, risks, and delivery of assistance?
• How can relief efforts best provide opportunities to support longer-lasting country safety net instruments to bridge the relief/development spectrum?

**Intended outcomes**

• The benefits and appropriateness of cash based transfers in emergency operations are highlighted
• Cash based transfer technology, used in a fragile state context, is showcased using examples
• Options and considerations for complementing cash with other modalities are discussed.

**Format**

**Chair and Moderator:**
- **Norway** – Ms. Leni Stenseth, Director, Section for Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

**Panel composition:**
- **Government of Somalia** – Dr. Maryan Qasim, Minister of humanitarian affairs and disaster management
- **WFP** – Mr. Laurent Bukera, Representative and Country Director WFP Somalia
- **CaLP** – Caroline Holt Interim Policy Coordinator, Cash Learning Partnership
- **World Vision** – Paula Gil Baizan, Global Humanitarian Director Cash-Based Programming, World Vision International
- **ICRC** – Mr Pascal Hundt, Head of Assistance Division, International Committee of the Red Cross
- **UNICEF** – Manuel Fontaine, Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF

**Contact**
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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Ms. Leni Stenseth, Director, Section for Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
Ms Stenseth is since September 2016 Director of the Section for Humanitarian Affairs in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ms Stenseth joined the Norwegian Foreign Service in 2001. She has been working at the Afghan Desk and has served at the Norwegian Embassies in Amman and Washington DC. From 2013 to 2016 she was Director for UN policy in the NMFA. In 2008, she joined the Norwegian Red Cross as a Head of Programmes in Asia, Americas and Europe. She later held the position of Director of Programmes and from 2011 to 2013; she was Head of International Operations, with overall responsibility for Norwegian Red Cross international humanitarian action in more than 40 countries worldwide. Leni Stenseth holds a Master Degree in Political Science/International Relations from the University of Oslo (Master Thesis on Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy – 1999). She obtained a diploma in Chinese Language from Fudan University in Shanghai in 1996 and has a Bachelor in Law and Political Sciences.

Dr. Maryan Qasim, Minister of humanitarian affairs and disaster management, Government of Somalia
Dr. Maryam Qasim is a medical doctor, a humanitarian and a politician. She worked as an obstetrician and gynaecologist as well as a university lecturer and a community activist in Somalia, Yemen, the Netherlands and Great Britain. She served in the Somali Transitional Federal Government in 2010 - 2011 as the Minister for Women's Development and Family Welfare. She also served as the Minister for Human Development and Public Services in the Somali Federal Government in 2012 – 2014 where her portfolio included health, education, higher education & culture, women & family affairs, youth, sports and labour. On 21 March 2017, she was appointed to the newly created post of Minister of Humanitarian and Disaster Management.

Mr. Laurent Bukera, Representative Somalia, World Food Programme
Laurent assumed his position in July 2014 as the Somalia Country Director and Representative for the World Food Programme. Prior to this assignment, Laurent held a number of senior positions with the World Food Programme including: Chief for Projects Budget and Programming, and Deputy Country Director based in Darfur, Sudan. Mr Bukera holds a degree in Economics and Financial accounting from the University of Lucien Cooremans and Louvain-la-Neuve. Laurent speaks English, French, Italian and Spanish. He was born in Burundi and is a Belgian national.

Caroline Holt, Cash Learning Partnership
Caroline Holt is currently the Interim Policy Coordinator at the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). She has worked in the humanitarian sector for the last 13 years in operational, representational and coordination roles for INGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. For the last 18 months, Caroline has been an independent consultant for the humanitarian sector. Caroline is a long-time advocate of the transformational capacity of humanitarian cash and has been engaged in cash programming since 2004.
Recent commitments for the scale up of quality cash interventions make this an important and fascinating time to be engaged in the global discussion on how to make these commitments a reality.

Paula Gil Baizan, Global Humanitarian Director Cash-Based Programming, World Vision International
With more than 14 years international experience in strategic planning, operations management and the participative development of policy thinking in humanitarian and development contexts, Paula has operational experience in cash transfer programming with the ICRC, Save the Children and World Vision. She has lead the strategic thinking on cash policy and advocacy work for the largest network of cash stakeholders the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). Country experience includes: Philippines, Pakistan, India, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Liberia, Djibouti, Syria, oPt, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Panama (El Darien), El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Nicaragua, Honduras and Colombia.

Mr Pascal Hundt, Head of Assistance Division, International Committee of the Red Cross
Pascal Hundt joined the ICRC in 1995 and carried out various assignments in the field, working successively as health delegate, health coordinator (Zaire, Congo Brazzaville, Afghanistan), deputy head of delegation and head of delegation (Somalia, Jordan, Sudan). At ICRC headquarters, Pascal has served as head of sector in the Assistance Division from 2000 to 2002 and, since September 2012, as head of the Assistance Division.

Manuel Fontaine, Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF
Manuel Fontaine took up his position as UNICEF Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes in early January 2017. Manuel has more than 25 years of experience with UNICEF that combines managerial and technical leadership in both development and emergency contexts. Prior to his current position, Manuel served as Regional Director for the West and Central Africa Region (WCAR) where he was responsible for overseeing UNICEF’s programmes in 24 countries. From August 2011 to August 2013, he was WCAR Deputy Regional Director, and before then he was UNICEF Representative in Algeria, Senior Advisor Child Protection in New York Headquarters, Deputy Representative in Afghanistan, Somalia and Albania, and Head of Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina.