

# Moving from emergency seed aid to seed security – linking relief with development

Workshop organized by the Drylands Coordination Group Norway and Caritas  
Norway, in collaboration with Norad and The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs in Oslo May 14th 2008

By Louise Sperling, Sigrid Nagoda and Astrid Tveteraas

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**The Drylands Coordination Group (DCG)** is an NGO-driven forum for exchange of practical experiences and knowledge on food security and natural resource management in the drylands of Africa. DCG facilitates this exchange of experiences between NGOs and research and policy-making institutions. The DCG activities, which are carried out by DCG members in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Mali and Sudan, aim to contribute to improved food security of vulnerable households in the drylands of Africa.

The founding DCG members consist of ADRA Norway, CARE Norway, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid, The Strømme Foundation and The Development Fund. The secretariat of DCG is located at the Environmental House (Miljøhuset G9) in Oslo and acts as a facilitating and implementing body for the DCG. The DCG's activities are funded by NORAD (the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation).

**Caritas Norway** is the development and relief organisation of the Catholic Church. Caritas Norway was established in 1952 as Norsk Katolsk Flyktningehjelp (Norwegian Catholic Help for Refugees), and in 1964 changed the name to Caritas Norway

The primary objectives of Caritas are to support programmes in poor countries within the areas of development co-operation, human rights, peace- and reconciliation work and emergency relief; to motivate the Catholics in Norway towards developing solidarity with the economically poor in other countries, and to increase awareness of unjust social structures and the causes of poverty

**The International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)** is a not-for-profit organization that conducts socially and environmentally progressive research aimed at reducing hunger and poverty and preserving natural resources in developing countries. CIAT is one of the 15 centres that make up the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

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## ACRONYMS

DCG	Drylands Coordination Group
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSD	Direct Seed Distribution (also known as “Seeds and Tools”)
GLCI	Great Lakes Cassava Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (of the United Nations)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OFDA	(United States) Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
SSSA	Seed System Security Assessment
SVF	Seed Vouchers and Fairs

## FOREWORD

On midnight in February 1976, I was shaken out of bed by the earthquake that killed 25,000 Guatemalans, wounded 250,000 others and made 1 million people homeless. Before the earthquake, a handful of NGOs operated in the country. Just a couple of days later, there were half a hundred or so. Those before and those after, while immediately helping thousands, committed most of the mistakes that could be made in the chaos of the quake and its aftershocks. Among such errors was the lack of assessment of the food and seed situation in the country. Informed assessments would have shown that the previous harvests were quite good and even under the rubble of the destroyed homes plenty of food grains and seeds were available.

Thousands of tons of unnecessary food and other items, as well as quantities of inappropriate and non-viable seeds, were distributed.

I wish we had known then what you all know now. Today's meeting was an important meeting about an urgent matter. As the world's attention is presently focused on food crises and food prices, what could be more crucial than seeds - these microcosms of our very existence?

Norad thanks you and wishes you well in your efforts to improve the seed linkage in emergency, rehabilitation and long-term development work.

Michael G. Angstreich  
Senior Advisor - Agriculture and Environment  
Norad - Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

## **1. WELCOME SPEECH BY ASTRID TVETERAAS, DRYLANDS COORDINATION GROUP (DCG)**

Dear all,

We are happy to welcome you to the seminar “**Moving from emergency seed aid to seed security - Linking relief with development**”. This seminar is organized by Caritas and the Drylands Coordination Group (DCG), in collaboration with Norad and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

DCG is a network of NGOs, government organisations and research institutions who work to enhance food security in the drylands of Mali, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. In Norway, the members of DCG are Norwegian Peoples Aid, Norwegian Church Aid, Development Fund, Care Norway and ADRA. Caritas is one of the world biggest civil society organisations which works in 162 countries and is present in around 200 000 communities all over the world. A significant share of Norwegian NGOs is thus behind this seminar. MFA and Norad have also been participating in the preparations.

When a disaster hits a country or a region - whether it is a natural disaster, such as floods or droughts or a human made emergency, such as armed conflicts - a response from the international society usually comes quite rapidly. Governments and NGOs allocate funds for relief which begins on the ground almost immediately. In these situations the focus is on immediate relief and the potential long term consequences of the intervention are often not well assessed.

The majority of the poor people in the world earns their living through agriculture and is completely dependent on a resilient agricultural system, in which seed systems are an important part, to survive. Humanitarian organizations often respond to a crisis in the agricultural sector by distributing free seeds to farmers in order to rehabilitate the sector and contribute to improved food security. Such Direct Seed Distribution has often been presented as more sustainable than food distribution and is commonly implemented during emergency responses. Ethiopia has for example received emergency seed aid for the past 34 years. During this time, at least US \$500 million has been spent on this.

This workshop will review ‘state of the art’ evidence on the effects of direct seed aid, but also of the procedures and effects of other types of seed-related assistance during an emergency. We should be aiming to support activities in emergency situations that help mitigate the immediate problem but that also promote the rehabilitation of stressed systems. One focus of this workshop will be on how to link relief to development.

This workshop is organized as an immediate response to the Norwegian White paper on preparedness for humanitarian catastrophes (Stortingsmelding nr. 9 (2007-2008)). It states that “*Distribution of seed can [...] have negative consequences for local food security. It is important to prevent seed being eaten in a humanitarian crisis in order to safeguard the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. It may not be an absolute shortage of seed that is the problem in a disaster area, but rather a relative shortage due to lack of purchasing power*” (p.37).

Related to its recent endorsement of the White paper, the Norwegian Parliament has asked the Government to develop guidelines for seed aid. The purpose of the workshop is to communicate the recent advances in seed aid understanding and assessment (including

concrete tools for better practice), to promote guidelines for more effective proposal development and to share experiences and identify needs for building a more sustainable Norwegian emergency response capacity.

During the first morning session, Mr Bjørn Johannessen from MFA will introduce the White paper on preparedness for humanitarian catastrophes. Bjørn Johannessen is a senior advisor in MFA, and has long experience on preparedness and mitigation issues and humanitarian work.

Then, Louise Sperling will give us an overview of the field emergency seed aid. Louise Sperling works at CIAT (International Centre for Tropical Agriculture). She is one of the leading researchers within the field of emergency seed aid and seed security and has already published several papers and articles and led many studies on the issue of seed aid in crisis situations.

During the second morning session, the focus will be on NGO's experiences with seed aid. Stephen Walsh from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) will give an introduction to market based approaches to emergency relief aid. Stephen Walsh works as Seed Objective Leader in the Great Lakes Cassava Initiative (GLCI) of CRS in eastern and central Africa.

We hope thereafter to have a fruitful and constructive discussion with the participants regarding their experiences on seed aid and the gap that exists between emergency and long term development.

Following this, the focus will be on best practices. Louise Sperling will give us an update of tools which may help managers and organizations move to more effective responses, such as a seed security assessment guide and seed aid better practice briefs.

After lunch, we will divide into two working groups:

1. Linking relief to development (serving the vulnerable in disaster periods) including a strategy for capacity building;
2. Establishing better practice principles for use in reviewing proposals and concrete implementation: Norway's special lead.

The aim of these working groups is to discuss and build upon seed aid best practices, tools and guidelines that could be used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad and the Norwegian humanitarian organizations to concretely improve practices. We also hope that the working groups will push Norwegian humanitarian actors to map specific steps forward.

Finally, before I leave the floor to Mr Johannessen, I would like to encourage you all to participate actively both in the discussions and in the working groups, so that this seminar becomes as fruitful as possible!

## **2. WELCOME SPEECH BY MR BJØRN JOHANNESSEN, NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) (SUMMARY)**

Mr. Bjørn Johannessen started his speech by commending the initiative behind the seminar, which he found timely. With reference to the ongoing debate internationally regarding high food and seed prices, he saw a strong need for close attention to the issues the seminar will address.

Expectations from the seminar:

1. To have an update on the latest research in the field of seed aid and seed security and to exchange views between partners
2. To address key issues that will help improve our performance when it comes to seed aid.
3. To push Norad and MFA to make a clearer link between emergency and development: “The better you do on development, the better it is for relief and vice versa”. E.g.: the work done in China on preparedness is not just a work to save lives but to see about the day after tomorrow. One of the major issues: to what extent do you manage to have this holistic approach?

Regarding the White Paper nr 9 (2007-2008) “Norwegian policy on the prevention of humanitarian crisis”: The MFA felt a need to work more closely on DRR (disaster risk reduction) and to outline a more pro-active Norwegian policy on DDR. Bjørn Johannessen stressed the importance of these issues being addressed (also) at the political level. During the process, there was broad participation from the civil society.

Two points of departure:

1. Millennium Development Goals (MDG) related to poverty reduction;
2. The importance of risk reduction – in itself and for making sustainable and resilient societies. Without risk reduction the fulfilment of the MDGs will be difficult.

Risks such as:

- Climate change;
- Settlement patterns are changing: More people move from rural areas to urban areas;
- The patterns of crisis are changing: what we see today is a “complex crisis. You have to look into the complexity of the background.”

MFA wants to:

- Improve coordination between short and long term activities;
- Establish long term work and partnerships in the most vulnerable countries: there is a need for more long term agreement involvement instead of ad hoc solutions;
- Increase the understanding for strong social cooperation: see among other work in Bangladesh, Cuba, Vietnam and China;
- Focus on inter-linkages and holistic approaches for good governance in civil society and the private sector.

Bjørn Johannessen further highlighted the Hyogo Declaration from the international conference in Kobe, in mid January 2005, and he emphasised the Norwegian efforts and contributions for giving the Declaration a holistic profile. He further explained that a holistic approach was also important for himself and the rest of the group writing the White Paper mentioned above.

For the implementation of the White Paper, Bjørn Johannessen highlighted:

1. Support of local capacity. Too often local capacities are undermined. Humanitarian organisations have to improve the involvement of local communities in their assessments and projects;
2. Coordination: there is too much overlap of work and poor coordination between the different actors. Avoid the “relief circus”;
3. Gender: Women are too often neglected;
4. Environmental challenges;
5. Civil vs. Military aspects: the roles should be clear to avoid confusion. The military aspect should be as small as possible, but they should be working towards enlarging humanitarian space;
6. There is a need to improve rehabilitation work and build back better. Building resilience is important in this respect. The main challenge is how to reduce the consequences of calamities.

On seed relief, there are some existing tools but how can humanitarian actors use them to make relief effective and better link relief with development. This is a challenge for Civil Society as well as Government agencies, and the issues are also a part of the agenda for this seminar.

## **2.1 RELEVANT EXTRACTS FROM THE WHITE PAPER: “NORWEGIAN POLICY ON THE PREVENTION OF HUMANITARIAN CRISES”**

**Box 1: Section 4.1.2 Food Security (items related to seed aid) from Report No. 9 (2007-2008) to the Parliament**

....

Food distribution is necessary in crisis situations, but this should take into account the population’s needs and cause the least possible damage to local production and markets. This requires sound analyses of the local food supply situation and careful assessment of what measures will give the best results (for example providing agricultural tools, seed, fertilizer, cash, etc.). Distribution of seed can also have negative consequences for local food security. It is important to prevent seed being eaten in a humanitarian crisis in order to safeguard the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. It may not be an absolute shortage of seed that is the problem in a disaster area, but rather a relative shortage due to lack of purchasing power. In the longer term it is important to ensure that the seed on offer is suitable for the local environmental, social and economic conditions. It will also be important to support the development of food crops and agricultural methods that are more adaptable to changes in precipitation levels and patterns..... (page 37)

### **3. EMERGENCY SEED AID: OVERVIEW OF FIELD, BY LOUISE SPERLING, INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR TROPICAL AGRICULTURE (CIAT)**

#### **3.1 OVERVIEW**

Seed provision to hasten the recovery of agricultural systems following disasters has become an important activity for many relief agencies. While a few cases of seed provision date back to the 1920's and 30's in the United States (in response to the Depression), and to the early 1970's in Ethiopia, it is only since the early 1990's, and particularly in Africa, that relief agencies have engaged in seed aid as a routine complement to food aid. Today, seed aid



**Figure 1: Louise Sperling (Photo: Norad)**

interventions are widespread throughout East, Central and Southern Africa, and are increasing particularly in West Africa and Asia. This workshop presentation reviews recent advances in our understanding of the need for, and the consequences of seed aid, and suggests several key steps for moving towards better practice. Much of the work presented draws from a recent overview paper (Sperling et al., 2008).

At its beginning, seed aid was seen as an innovative step in helping farmers recover and improve their farming systems, and aimed to shorten dependency on food aid. The logic has been straightforward: communities affected by disaster (for example, drought, flood, short-term conflict) should be given the means to produce their own food. Seed aid, in concept, has been seen as empowering to farmers and as cost-effective. However, the repetitiveness of seed aid, as well as its swiftly escalating scale, has encouraged many donors and practitioners to take a closer look at its effectiveness. Some countries receive seed aid on a regular basis for instance, Burundi for over 26 seasons and Ethiopia, nearly every year since 1974. In terms of scale, FAO alone reports that it executed some 400 seed-relief and rehabilitation projects between 2001 and 2003.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Recent studies analyzing the effects of disasters on seed systems have had surprising findings. Contrary to 'popular belief' local seed systems prove remarkably resilient. Research across different types of stress - civil strife, drought, flood - shows that farmers, during and immediately post-emergency, obtain most of their seed from local channels, including home stocks and local markets. 'Emergency' seed aid generally accounts for less than 1/8 of the seed actually sown. This trend includes some of the very worst crises, such as the Rwanda civil war and subsequent genocide, which exploded in the middle of the agricultural growing season, or in Afghanistan, immediately post 2002-2003 in civil strife (Table 1).

**Table 1: Importance of Relief Seed and Market Seed in Farmers' Seed Supply during Disaster Periods**

Country	Trigger stress/ year	Crop	% of seed planted obtained through relief	% seed obtained through local market
Zimbabwe	drought/ political instability/2003	Pearl millet	12	not available
Rwanda	civil war/1995	Beans	6, 28	26,52
Kenya	drought/1997	Maize	11	39
Somalia	drought/2000	Sorghum		
Deyr			10	25
Gu			17	25
Somalia	drought//2000	Maize		
Deyr			3	33
Gu			3	43
Afghanistan	civil strife 2002-2003	Range of crops	5.4-7.2	not available

Source: Sperling *et al.* 2008

This observation does not mean that farmers lack problems after crises, but rather that we may have been diagnosing them incorrectly. Seed *is generally available*, but farmers *struggle to gain access to it*: simply they are poorer, may not have money to buy seed or lack networks to exchange for it. Local markets can, and do, provide much of the seed during and immediately post-crises, so supporting continued market functioning is key.

Disaster analyses also show that ‘emergency aid’ is most often being given in ‘chronic stress contexts’ that is areas where people lack seed simply because they are poor and not necessary due to acute stress (emergencies) at all. Hence, relief approaches, unfolding in recurrent stress areas, should aim to link ‘relief to development’ from the initial stages of response. Stop gap interventions (particularly repeated stop gap operations) in *chronic stress areas* should no longer be accepted.

Note that repeated delivery of emergency seed in chronic stress areas is leading to ‘chronic seed aid relief’ itself (Table 2).

**Table 2: Chronic Seed Aid Distribution**

Country	Seed Aid Distributions*
Burundi	26 Seasons (13 years) : since 1995
Eastern Kenya	92-93; 95-97; 2000-2002; 2004
Ethiopia	34 years: seed aid near continuous since 1974
Malawi	9 seasons or more since 1992
Zimbabwe	Near continuous since 1991 (food aid, seed aid or both)

Source: Sperling *et al.*, 2008

Aside from often not addressing the correct problem, this delivery of repeated aid is having a number of negative consequences. Increasingly, evidence shows that repeated distribution

distorts farmers' own seed procurement strategies. For example, farmers in the Tana Region of Kenya, routinely list 'seed relief' as one of the basic channels on which they count on to procure seed, season after season. The dependency on handouts has become so great (for both food and seed) that government policy strongly discourages free distribution and rather promotes relief aid which is paid for directly or reimbursed later. In terms of markets, free seed delivery has been shown to undermine local seed/grain market functioning, particularly in terms of retail sales and even to compromise the development of longer-term more commercial seed supply systems.

### 3.3 USING SEED SECURITY FRAMEWORKS THAT MATCH SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Analyzing disasters has helped us think about what seed security should try to achieve. The Seed Security Framework (Remington *et al.*, 2002) outlines the conceptual elements inherent in seed security: seed has to be available, farmers need to be able to access it, and the seed must be of a satisfactory quality (in terms of health, adaptability and meeting farmers' varietal preferences) (Table 3). This three-fold characterization of seed security diverges from the more popular notions which equate insecurity mainly with lack of seed from a harvest, that is, lack of self-produced seed.

Analysis of seed security also requires consideration of another, cross-cutting parameter, related to the duration of the stress: whether it is 'acute' or 'chronic' (recognizing here also that the divisions are not absolute).

**Table 3: Seed Security Framework**

Parameter	Description
<b>Availability</b>	Sufficient seed of appropriate crops available within reasonable proximity and in time for planting
<b>Access</b>	People have adequate land, income, or social connections to access seed, including through purchase or barter where necessary
<b>Quality</b>	Seed is of acceptable quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ healthy</li> <li>▪ adapted and acceptable varieties</li> </ul>

After Remington *et al.* 2002

Thinking through the three aspects of acute and chronic seed insecurity – availability, access, and seed quality – can help relief workers better design and target their responses. For example, if availability turns out to be the problem, then seed-based interventions, like importing seed to address an acute shock or promoting community-based seed production enterprises to address chronic stress, may be appropriate.

Identifying seed access as a major constraint might wisely trigger a more holistic analysis of livelihood strategies. Providing farmers with cash or vouchers to get their desired seed might be on the mark to address short-term problems of access. However, if chronic lack of access is the key problem, this should lead practitioners to look well beyond seed and seed security constraints. The continuing inability to obtain certain necessities of life is usually equated with basic poverty. Initiatives to help farmers generate income and strengthen their livelihoods are essential here.

Suffice to say that, to date, there have been few explicit assessments of seed insecurity during or even after an emergency. Instead, relief agencies have made various ‘default’ assumptions. Most commonly, a problem of availability is assumed, that ‘there’s simply not enough seed to go around within the affected zone.’ Hence, practitioners spend their time calculating how much seed to buy and bring in – rather than assessing real constraints on the ground. A better understanding of seed security concepts, along with informed use of the seed security assessment methods (described in workshop session 4.2) should lead to more accurate problem identification and targeted response: Table 4 gives some examples.

**Table 4: Seed system problems and broadly appropriate responses**

<b>Constraint on seed security</b>	<b>Short-term response</b>	<b>Longer-term response</b>
Seed is not available	Direct distribution of seed	Support development of seed production, including commercial enterprises where viable
Poor and vulnerable farmers lack access to seed	Cash disbursement Seed fairs with vouchers or cash Local procurement and distribution	Poverty-reduction programs, e.g. support for the development of agro-enterprises and other ways to generate income

### **3.4 REVIEW OF CURRENT APPROACHES**

Below is a quick review of the types of seed-related interventions currently being implemented (Table 5). They are distinguished between those which deliver direct forms of aid (and generally assume ‘a lack of available seed’) and those which are market-based and give recipients cash or vouchers to themselves procure seed (and hence assume ‘lack of access’ as the driving need). Responses which focus on seed quality issues, both varietal quality and seed quality per se (health, germination rates, and purity) are also listed.

**Table 5: Typology of Current Seed System Interventions**

	Description / Rationale	Constraints to which they should be targeted
<i>Direct Aid</i>		
<b>1. Direct Seed Distribution</b> Emergency Seed Provision ‘Seeds and tools’	Procurement of quality seed from outside the agro-ecological region, for delivery to farmers. The most widely used approach to seed relief.	Short term response to address problems of seed availability especially in situations of total crop failure and/or long-term displacement of farmers. Response also used to introduce new crops + varieties that are often supplied by formal sector
<b>2. Local procurement and distribution of seed</b>	Procurement of quality seed from within the agro-ecological region, for delivery to farmers. A variant of 1.	Short term response to address problems of seed access or highly localized problems of seed availability
<b>3. Food aid</b> ‘Seed aid protection ration’	Food aid is often supplied in emergency situations alongside seed aid so that the farming family does not need to consume the seed provided. Where local seed systems are functioning, but the previous harvest was poor, food aid can similarly protect farmers’ own seed stocks.	Short term response accompanying direct seed distribution to address problems of seed availability
<i>Market-based approaches</i>		
<b>4. Vouchers / Cash to farmers</b>	Vouchers or cash can provide poorer farmers with the means to access seed where it is available, from local markets, or the commercial sector. Vouchers or cash enable farmers to access crops and varieties of their choice.	Short term response to address problems of seed access especially in situations of local seed shortages and where local markets or farmer-farmer barter normally used
<b>5. Seed Fairs</b>	Seed fairs provide an ad hoc market place to facilitate access to seeds, or specific crops and varieties, from other farmers, traders, and the formal sector. Usually used in conjunction with vouchers to provide poorer farmers with purchasing power.	Short or medium term response to address problems of seed access especially for subsistence crops, and where local markets normally used
<i>Seed production and varietal development</i>		
<b>6. Seed Production</b> Community-based, local seed production	Farmers are trained and/or contracted to produce seed, distinct from their regular production activities, often based on formal seed standards. Some approaches focus on improving quality attributes, others are designed to facilitate the movement of new ‘improved varieties into local systems; still others are conceived as basically income-generating or profit-making enterprises.	Medium or long term response to address problems of seed quality (of local materials) or, access or availability of new varieties
<b>7. Provision or development of better varieties</b> through small packets, participatory varietal selection, or participatory plant breeding	Important where farmers need access to new genetic material	Medium or long term response to address problems of seed quality (genetic/ varietal attributes).

Source: Sperling *et al.* 2008

One response is not a priori better than another, as much also depends on the specific way the approach is implemented. However, Direct Seed Distribution (DSD), by far the most common approach, ‘treats’ (or mis-treats) a seed security problem that is relatively rare: that is, lack or unavailable of seed. This repeated, supply-side response also does not respect the ‘do no harm’ principle’.

### 3.5 MOVING FORWARD

In terms of moving forward, the presentation suggested forward looking action in six realms:

1. Shape an enabling environment for seed aid improvement. Norway might promote/adopt broad policy “Guidelines for Better Seed Relief”

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization in 2004 adopted guiding principles for better seed relief (Box 2 below). Unfortunately, the UN itself has made few moves forward in actually implementing these. Ethiopia is also in the process of defining policy guidelines (aiming to finalize these late 2008, early 2009). Perhaps Norway should consider whether official ‘better practice’ seed aid guidelines would be useful.

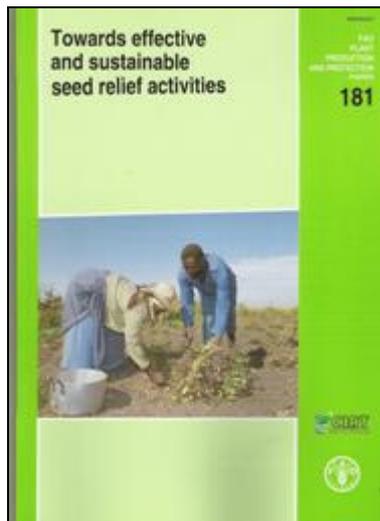


Figure 2: United Nations FAO guidelines: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/y5703e/y5703e00.htm>

**Box 2: UN – FAO: Basic Guiding Principles for Seed Relief**

1. A needs assessment should underpin any decisions to undertake seed relief and should guide the choice among possible interventions. This needs assessment should be holistic, putting seed security in the context of livelihood security.
2. Seed relief interventions have to be clearly matched to the context (for example, a crisis caused by drought may require very different actions from a crisis caused by war). By supporting food production, seed relief should decrease dependence on repeated food aid.
3. Seed relief activities should aim to both (i) be effective with the immediate objective of facilitating access to appropriate planting material; and (ii) to contribute to the restoration, rehabilitation, or improvement of agricultural systems in the longer term.
4. Ideally, considerations of seed system sustainability should be built into seed interventions from the beginning. As a minimum, seed aid should do no harm to farming systems. Thus, emergency relief activities should support local seed system development, ideally by integrating long-term needs in the design of the project.
5. Seed relief activities should be built upon a solid understanding of all the seed systems farmers use and the role they have in supporting livelihoods. The local system is usually more important in farmers' seed security and has been shown to be quite resilient. Depending on the context, the focus in an emergency should normally be on keeping the local seed system operational. One practical problem is that seed systems are often not sufficiently understood, especially in emergency situations. Hence, there is a need for more emphasis on understanding seed systems and their role in supporting livelihoods, and on needs assessment.
6. Seed relief interventions should facilitate farmers' choices of crops and varieties. Seed relief interventions should aim to improve, or at least maintain, seed quality and aim to facilitate access to varieties that are adapted to environmental conditions and farmers' needs, including nutritional needs.
7. Monitoring and evaluation should be built into all seed relief interventions, to facilitate learning by doing and thereby to improve interventions.
8. An information system should be put in place to improve institutional learning and as a repository of information gained from cumulative experience. Such information systems should be institutionalized at national levels, to the greatest extent possible.
9. A strategy to move from the acute emergency response to a capacity building or development phase should be included in the design of the intervention.

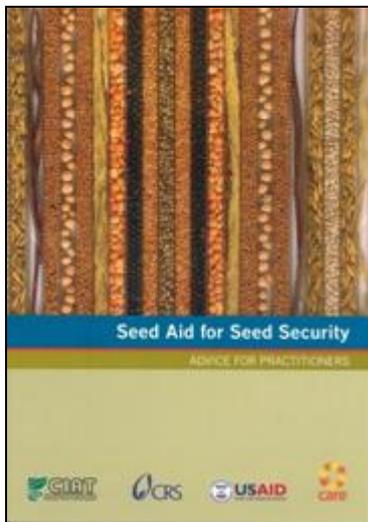
These guiding principles were endorsed by the FAO Emergency Coordination Group (Rome, 20 June 2003), based on the recommendations of a stakeholders' workshop "Improving the Effectiveness and Sustainability of Seed Relief" (Rome, 26–28 May 2003). The initial draft was prepared by the FAO seed relief discussion group.

2. Promote use of specific instruments for reviewing and developing better seed aid proposals (more technically rigorous and equitable designs)

The United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has itself furthered the development of a rapid review checklist for seed-aid related proposals. This 17-point guide helps even non-seed specialists effectively review proposals and takes less than one hour to use [(Developing a Seed-Aid Proposal: A Rapid Review Checklist for Practitioners (Sperling *et al.* 2006)]. Note that the checklist will be presented in more detail in one of the afternoon working groups. Again, such a tool might be useful for the MFA and Norad.

3. Share widely evolving technical and social insights on better implementation on the ground

Our understanding of the ‘how to’ of seed aid has changed dramatically in the last five years. Poor practice, or ignorant practice, throwing out seed as if the intervention were a quick ‘DHL’ delivery, should no longer be tolerated. A set of better practice briefs will be presented during the workshop session 4.2. These were jointly developed by CIAT, CRS and Care Norway.



**Figure 3: Better Practice Implementation guidelines available in English, French and Portuguese at: <http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/Africa/seeds.htm> and <http://www.catholicrelief.org>**

4. Build capacity, and increase funding, for ‘relief approaches which link recovery to development’

Emergency seed aid is increasingly taking place in areas which are characterized by chronic stress: poverty, under-development, low agricultural performance. Given such a context, emergency aid should be designed to strength systems (support local markets, support local innovation, give access to better performing varieties, if appropriate). Varied approaches need to be tested and compared - with the donor and practitioner environment prepared to promote and implement the more effective responses.

5. Support learning evaluations: what works, what does not, what harms

It is hard to correct seed aid practice when implementers are reluctant to say that anything has ‘gone wrong’, or that parts of the intervention could have been better.

Most evaluations, if done at all, report efficiency statistics. For example, how much seed was delivered, to how many people? Few evaluations really look at issues of seed aid effectiveness: was the seed sown? did it grow? did seed aid make a difference in seed supply?

Simply, real evaluations and learning evaluations need to be encouraged. One issue will be whether the donors can embrace more reflective, honest, and possibly negative reports?

6. Stop bad practice: put in procedures to review/change/halt repetitive seed aid

Finally, it is not enough to promote better practice. We also have to be willing to stop bad practice. We see cases of seed aid being given 3, 4, 8, 10 seasons in a row. Some donors give aid in 'emergency' simply because no real plan exists for more developmental agricultural aid. At what point should there be a procedural obligation to re-examine strategies?

Should procedures be put in place for an 'automatic' seed aid review, after a certain point — for instance after 3 seasons of aid?

A simple procedure could make a significant difference.

The overall good news is that positive change is happening. In the last five years, we have come to appreciate that 'seed access' not 'seed availability' tends to be the more common problem post-disaster. A greater range of responses is also being implemented: cash, vouchers, seed fairs, trade input fairs (some of which we will examine in other sessions). Some wise guiding principles have been adopted (although mostly in the books), and better practice implementation advice is now more widely circulated.

The issue in this workshop is how Norway itself should move forward toward better practice. The recent White Paper has set the stage for significant steps toward greater effectiveness. This workshop offers a venue for mapping some of the key next steps.

#### **4. MARKET-BASED APPROACHES TO EMERGENCY, BY STEPHEN WALSH, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS)**

The presentation by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) focused on their experiences with a market based model to help farm families recover from disaster by accessing agricultural inputs via the Seed Vouchers & Fair approach.

As a large international NGO working across many sectors in humanitarian response and development in over 80 countries, Catholic Relief Services and partners (CRS) in many respects are representative of the seed aid practitioner community at the field level. Since 1999, CRS has been working on voucher-based responses as a means to help farming families affected by natural or man-made disaster to access seed. CRS' efforts to embrace a more market-based approach to support farming families access seed and agricultural inputs to recover from both acute and chronic shocks to farming systems has come out of an emerging recognition by the seed aid practitioner community of the inherent problems with direct distribution models of seed aid.

Direct distribution models, referred to as 'Seed and Tools' by seed aid practitioners, are characterized by a strong preference to purchase seed in bulk through formal seed channels and a heavy logistics orientation. Problems with direct seed distribution include high costs, delays in delivery resulting in missed planting at farm level, increased evidence of poor seed quality and inappropriate varieties, an overemphasis on hybrid seed which is not easily adaptable to small farmer systems, and emerging concerns that these models discourage the development of small scale commercial seed channels which can effectively integrate with farmer seed systems.



**Figure 4: Seed sellers and buyers, Makebuko Parish, Gitega Province, Burundi (March 2004) Photo: Stephen Walsh, CRS**

CRS, through what is termed the Seed Vouchers & Fair (SVF) approach, have taken a different tact from direct seed distribution. Seed Vouchers & Fairs is an alternative relief seed model which focuses on demand rather than supply. This market-oriented approach sources seed from predominantly farmer seed channels and bases the intervention where farmer access to seed, and not availability of seed within the intervention zone, is the constraint. The vouchers are a currency with restricted redemption. The fair is a

dedicated market event where seed sellers and voucher holders interact.

The CRS presentation made at the Oslo meeting reviewed the values and methodology underpinning SVF, presented a series of photos based on experience in Burundi which demonstrate the steps to the approach, provide examples of the scaling and growth of the

approach within CRS, discussed key quality indicators for SVFs, outlined the major lessons learned arising out of the organization's experience implementing this approach in more than 20 countries, and outlined some of the road ahead with respect to SVF and other market-based approaches to meeting seed needs of farmers.

Seed Vouchers & Fairs promote choice and empowerment, build on partnerships and community capacities, and are rooted in the CRS Guiding Principles which are the basic values that shape the work, relationships and management decisions at CRS. While drawn from Catholic Social Teaching, these values are expressed in many faith traditions. Solidarity, Stewardship, Option for the Poor, Dignity and Equality of the Human Person, Rights & Responsibilities, Social Nature of Humanity, Subsidiarity, Common Good.

Since 1999, CRS has used SVF to serve more than one half million farming families with seed. The rise of the approach in scale came as a result of a concerted effort to train local partners and through advocacy effort to the donor community which were strengthened through strong links between CRS and the agricultural research and development community.

Major lessons learned from the CRS multi-country experience with seed vouchers and fairs include: the recognition that understanding farmer seed systems is the basis for any successful intervention; the appreciation that pre-intervention seed security assessments need to be formalized; the acknowledgement that more effective seed aid must be characterized by a better integration of the farmer, market and formal seed systems; and the realization that the social capital and linking relief to development which is engendered by the approach need to be better documented.

The general benefits of the seed vouchers and fair approach include: empowering the poor affected by disaster with choice; connecting local seed vendors with the seed insecure within a community; injecting financial capital into disaster affected communities; and supporting small seed sellers, many of whom are women. The seed vouchers and fair approach also allows farmers the freedom to exercise a variety of strategies and can promote diversity of crops and cultivars as well as enable farmers to access seed in a timely manner conducive with the planting season. From an institutional perspective, the seed vouchers and fair create a more level playing field for farmer and formal sector seed and promote an increased level of accountability to donors, governments, communities, and most importantly farming households affected by disaster.

There are six quality indicators for a seed fair. The ratio of vendors to voucher recipients, which generally speaking should not exceed 30 to 1, is an important measure of the extent of choice at a fair for a specific voucher recipient. A discrete fair should aim to serve approximately 500 voucher holders as the service to a voucher recipient is difficult to maintain when the numbers are much higher. The seed fair team should be recruited and



**Figure 5: Vouchers, Ruyigi town, Ruyigi Province, Burundi (September 2003) Photo: Stephen Walsh, CRS**

trained locally in order to ensure that local capacities are effectively tapped into and strengthened. As a rule of thumb the price of seed in a fair should approximate the price of the same seed in the local market. Given the dominant role of women in agriculture trade, marketing, and production, the percentage of female vendors and voucher recipients at a discrete seed fair are critical quality indicators to track. Lastly, effective analysis of a seed fair is only possible when reporting is done for each discrete seed fair.

The road ahead for CRS with this market oriented approach will involve raising the quality of SVF interventions, increasing the formal use of pre-intervention seed security assessment tools, documenting efforts and promoting advocacy at multiple levels, and pursuing new markets for vouchers (labor, tools, small ruminants, fertilizer, vegetatively propagated crops).

## **5. UPDATES OF TOOLS WHICH MAY HELP MANAGERS AND ORGANIZATIONS MOVE TO MORE EFFECTIVE RESPONSES, BY LOUISE SPERLING (CIAT)**

During this workshop session, two sets of tools were reviewed, which should prove useful for donors, project managers and humanitarian implementers. These included a) a set of **Seed Aid Practice Briefs**, giving practical advice on seed-related field implementation in times of acute and chronic stress and b) a **Seed Security Assessment Manual**, again for use in both acute and chronic stress periods. Both are briefly described below and are available in hard copy as well as in electronic form (addresses below).

### **5.1 SEED AID FOR SEED SECURITY: ADVICE FOR PRACTITIONERS (PRACTICE BRIEFS)**

Lessons learned on ‘better practice in seed aid’ have greatly accelerated in the last five years. This increased understanding is due to: insights from a growing number of comprehensive seed-aid related case studies, more regular evaluations of emergency implementation programs; better assessment of the different kinds of support needed for seed security among small farmers; and the expansion in the types of seed-related emergency approaches being tested on the ground (beyond direct seed distribution to vouchers and cash, seed fairs, livelihood fairs....).

The ten ‘Practice Briefs’ offer advice on how to sustain and strengthen seed systems during disaster response and recovery periods. Up-to-date technical information addresses issues such as introducing new varieties, protecting agrobiodiversity, and exploiting market opportunities during periods of acute and chronic stress. Specific aid-response tools are also offered, including methods for assessing seed system security, guidelines for learning-focused evaluations, and checklists to ensure quality in seed-aid proposal development.

The briefs were prepared by the International Center for Tropical CIAT, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), with CARE-Norway. They are available in English, French and Portuguese, and can be downloaded from: [http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/africa/practice\\_briefs.htm](http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/africa/practice_briefs.htm) or <http://www.catholicrelief.org>. To-date, websites indicated over 27,000 downloads. Hard copies can also be obtained from CIAT Communication Unit, A.A. 6713, Cali Colombia.

The full list of briefs includes:

1. Who are we and what do we do?
2. Overview of seed systems under stress project case studies
3. Understanding seed security
4. Agrobiodiversity and seed relief
5. Using seed aid to give farmers access to seed of new varieties
6. Understanding seed systems used by small farmers in Africa: focus on markets
7. Assessing seed system security
8. Seed relief responses: an overview
9. The power of evaluation
10. Developing a seed-aid proposal: a rapid review checklist for practitioners

Two of the practice briefs were presented in some depth during the May 14<sup>th</sup> workshop. Practice Brief 5, on whether or not to give new varieties during stress periods, maps basic steps for a) evaluating whether new variety introductions should take place, and if so, b) the

‘how to’ of doing so, to minimize risk among already vulnerable populations. Practice Brief 10, a checklist for seed-aid proposal development (and donor review), presents 17 features critical to the development of sound seed assistance proposals. Focusing on *Assessment* (5 criteria), *Intervention Objectives and Strategy* (5 criteria), and *Implementation and Activity Programming* (7 criteria). The checklist helps even non-experts effectively review proposals (and develop better ones) and requires less than a hour to use. (Checklist has been appended, Table 6, below).

## 5.2 WHEN DISASTER STRIKES: A GUIDE TO ASSESSING SEED SECURITY

While seed security and food security have some elements in common, they are nevertheless quite different. One can have enough seed to sow a plot, but lack sufficient food to eat – for example, during the ‘hungry season’ prior to harvest. Conversely, a household can have adequate food but lack access to seed (or the right seed) for planting. This happens more rarely, but can occur if seed stocks kept in the house become infested with insect pests or are otherwise contaminated, or if a disease outbreak requires a switch to a resistant crop variety.

Despite these key differences between food security and seed security, determinations of seed security have nearly always been based, implicitly or explicitly, on food security assessments. Evaluators assess food needs and then just extrapolate seed requirements as part of the aid package. Similarly, they may estimate existing food stocks by measuring harvests or crop losses. If there is a sharp drop in the harvest, they know there will also be a steep decline in food availability. However, this direct link is not necessarily true of seed systems; that is, a production shortfall does not necessarily lead to a seed shortfall.

This workshop session introduced The Seed System Security Assessment (SSSA) guide. The practical 90-page guide is put on offer as a way to increase the positive effects of seed aid and presents a seven-step method for assessing the security of farmers’ seed systems in situations of acute or chronic stress. The occasion may be a natural disaster such as a flood, drought, earthquake or insect pest invasion; or it could be a crisis of human making such as civil war, political instability or economic recession. Whatever the crisis or stress, the guide serves as a practical field manual for donor agencies, government ministries, non-governmental organizations, and individuals charged with agricultural relief and recovery, including those with little or no expertise with seed systems.

More specifically, the SSSA guide helps staff assess whether interventions in seed systems are needed, and if so, guides the choice of relief or development actions. The guide is structured to help humanitarian personnel:

1. Identify zones for assessment and possible intervention;
2. Describe the normal status of the crop and seed systems;
3. Describe the broad effects of the disaster on these farming systems;
4. Set goals for agricultural relief and recovery operations, based on farmers’ needs;
5. Assess the post-crisis functioning of seed channels to determine whether short-term assistance is needed;
6. Identify any chronic needs of the seed system that require longer-term solutions, as well as emerging development opportunities;
7. Determine appropriate short- and longer-term responses based on the analysis of priority constraints, opportunities, and farmer needs.

Why do we need such a guide to SSSA and related interventions? Do we not know how to execute direct seed distributions during times of stress? Are we not already adept at

conducting seed voucher programs and seed fairs? And during a crisis, if the planting season is imminent, is it not better to give out seeds to farmers right away and do the necessary follow-ups or evaluation later?

The answer is that our understanding of the effects of emergency seed programs has improved immensely in the past five years, and that there are both flaws in current practices and much scope for improvement. As it turns out, intervening in seed systems is serious business, sometimes a matter of life and death. Seed is at the heart of agricultural production and determines what farmers grow and whether they will have a harvest. As part of the harvest is often saved as seed to be sown in subsequent seasons, even short-term interventions in the seed system may have significant effects over many seasons.

We've also learned that badly designed and poorly implemented seed aid during a crisis seriously harms farmers, making them even more vulnerable to uncertainties caused by crisis. Supplying them with seeds of unsuitable crop species or varieties results in low yields and wastes scarce labor and land. Unnecessary seed deliveries suppress regional economies and undermine emerging or growing seed markets. The bottom line is that 'do-gooder' aid, though well intentioned, may create long-term dependency, at the same time destroying local coping mechanisms. Avoiding these pitfalls is a major concern for professionals and institutions intent on delivering better seed aid and better seed system support.

The guide will be formally issued in July 2008 and available first in English at <http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/africa/seeds.htm>.

**Table 6: Developing a Seed-Aid Proposal: A Rapid Review Checklist for Practitioners (Sperling et al. 2006)**

CRITERIA		Y	N	Further Needs/Comments
<b>Assessments</b>				
1	Is the disaster sufficiently well described, in terms of scope and detail, to provide context for the intervention?			
2	Have the <i>ex ante</i> cropping systems been adequately and accurately described?			
3	Have the <i>ex ante</i> seed systems been adequately and accurately described?			
4	Is the diagnosis of the impact of the disaster on seed security supported?			
5	From the assessment, does it appear appropriate and feasible to consider a farming-related intervention within the period specified?			
<b>Intervention Objectives and Strategy</b>				
6	Are the proposed objectives for seed-related assistance clear?			
7	Do the objectives and proposed strategy address the seed security problem? • short term    • longer term			
8	Is the proposed strategy sound and supported by past experience?			
9	Have the populations needing seed-related assistance been adequately defined?			
10	Are the choices for seed channels clearly explained and justified? (Distinguish between seed multiplication and distribution, if appropriate.)			
<b>Implementation and Activity programming</b>				
11	If seed is to be made available through some form of aid, are the activities for ensuring variety and seed quality explicit and sufficient?			
12	Are monitoring, evaluation and reporting planned and budgeted? (Distinguish short-term focus on outputs and longer-term focus on impact and learning.)			
13	Is an exit strategy articulated?			
14	Does the proposal engage and empower women and communities?			
15	Is there the required expertise and capacity to achieve the objectives (both within the institution and <i>via</i> collaborators)?			
16	Is the timing feasible to achieve the objectives?			
17	Have possible negative effects been anticipated (with necessary actions programmed)?			

## **6. GROUP WORK**

Two working groups were formed to further the Norway specific discussions (see Annex for Working Group Guidelines). One group focused on promoting better seed aid practice in the field, among humanitarian practitioners. The second group concentrated on shaping a more enabling policy and project manager environment.

### **6.1 SUMMARY OF GROUP WORK 1: LINKING RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT: SERVING THE VULNERABLE IN DISASTER PERIODS**

#### 1. Review of approaches

- Based on the information obtained during the day, the group agreed that there is a clear disconnect between the knowledge development agencies have and their behaviour. We know what works, but still we do not do it. There is thus a need for capacity building and advocacy in order to promote behaviour change in the development agencies. Where there is disconnect between knowledge and behaviour change, there is need to assess WHY and allocate effort accordingly. With respect to seed aid as it is currently constituted, the 'disconnect between knowledge and behaviour' is most pronounced with agencies / organizations dealing with large scale seed aid where there is likely institutional barriers to change. For smaller NGOs and agencies there are often not many activities in terms of emergency seed aid. In these cases a 'knowledge campaign' may be enough, as these agencies would tend to have less institutional orientation to for example a direct distribution approach to seed aid.
- Any seed intervention approach requires an upfront understanding of the seed system where the intervention is planned and a review of what seed system interventions are or have been implemented in the target region.
- There is a conflict of interest behind the seed business but Norway does not have any vested interest in this business which is why Norway can make a change.
- There is a need for more coordination of the relief work and a stronger linkage both between different NGOs and between NGOs, Norad and MFA. The donor coordination should be done at the lowest level. We should avoid situations as were seen in Sri Lanka after the Tsunami where the high influx of donors in some cases merely contributed to increase the chaotic situation. The problem is not only too many donors but too much money to be spent in too short of time. The result is classic 'inflation' both in terms of the cost of the intervention and in terms of expectations from recipient communities, local authorities, agencies, donors. Communities in post emergency situations have limited capacity to absorb resources; this is exasperated when the terms of aid are short term and so the impacts are inflationary.

#### 2. Strategy for capacity building

- When doing capacity building we should use a holistic approach and look at the wider context, not only at the seed system. Communities are complex and there is no one size fits all-solution. The wider context here would include government structures and extension services existing in the target area, inventory of the organizations and NGOs working in agriculture within the target area, and a basic understanding of the farming system within the target area.

- The analysis of the seed system should include:
  1. Availability
  2. Accessibility
  3. Seed quality (genetic & technical)
- When distributing seeds in emergency operations, there are no formal requirements to the seed dealers (such as we have in Norway). It should be recommended that the distributions are done by people with specialized qualifications within seed. The challenge is that there are not enough funds to certify seeds. In addition, one of the dangers of certifying seeds is that it might lead to a monopoly. There are also problems of corruption in certification. Should Norway promote a requirement for a formal seed distributor's certificate for those dealing with seed distribution in emergencies?

It should be noted that the emergency seed response in Southern Sudan was, at least for programs funded by USAID, for nearly a decade marked by the requirement that all seed disseminated have 'Seed Certification Certificate's'. Indeed, USAID supported 'seed' did have the certificates. These certificates were acquired in sometimes quite dubious means and in any event the sheer quantity of seed that was moved created an environment where ONLY large seed companies were able to handle the logistics and acquire the certificates. In the Southern Sudan example, due to the reliance on large quantities - the seed often came quite long distances and was not suitable to local growing conditions. One could argue that in this case of Southern Sudan, the requirement of 'Certification' created a barrier to local producers and actually led to an extremely ineffective response.

'Certification' can thus be a disadvantage if it is operationalized in a manner which leads to only a very few seed vendors offering seed. Nevertheless, there should be some minimum standards for seed dissemination agencies. The seed aid community should look to implement these standards in a demand driven manner where the seed dissemination agencies are encouraged and motivated to train staff and meet standards due not simply from regulation and law but also out of some financial and higher motivation to serve people. It should be noted that in places like Burundi, the organizations engaged in the dissemination of direct seed distribution with FAO seed tend to have little or no agricultural expertise or interest in seed systems.

- Any agency that is involved in seed distribution should document that they have adequate technical competence, and that they know relevant national laws and regulations, and policies. Regulations on the importation of seeds include important quarantine measures (preventing the inadvertent introduction of new pests, diseases, and weeds) and avoiding unwanted seed types (such as varieties with poor local adaptation, and hybrid varieties in cases where that is inappropriate). In some cases there are also internal (within-country) quarantine regulations to prevent the distribution pests (such as the parasitic weed striga) from infested to non-infested areas.
- Donors should organise training workshops for key persons in the local NGOs, on Seed System Security Assessment, guideline points and seed regulations in their own country. An example of the need for knowledge about the local regulation can be taken from Ethiopia where due to lack of knowledge about the phytosanitary regulations of the country, measures intended to improve agricultural production can easily lead to the spread of the weed Striga.

- Cooperatives should be encouraged. They can work together on protecting the local seed. They can e.g. collaborate on post harvest storage to reduce seed losses. Training at local level on seed selection should be supported.
- The principles for seed relief are meant for donors. However, the local communities/authorities should also be provided with guidelines for how to monitor the work done by NGOs. These guidelines should empower them to follow the process and make sure that the operations are done in line with the local community's priorities, traditions and wishes.
- We should be aware that not everyone has access to seed in a conflict situation even though the seed is there. The guidelines need to be adapted to each specific situation and each specific vulnerable group. There should for instance be particular guidelines for displaced people.
- Participatory planning of the operations is necessary. Local authorities must be included in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the operation.
- Other options than seed and voucher fairs should also be looked into such as small lot tendering and seed multiplication (chronic response). Actors on the ground should be encouraged to look at the context and identify the best solution (not everyone has the same access so need to have different approaches).

### 3. Opportunities and constraints to improve the seed relief work

- Motivation among the donors and back donors (such as MFA).
- The government and policy environment can in many countries be a constraint, but in Norway we now have a major opportunity to contribute to change practice due to the positive policy environment and the content of the White Paper on emergency prevention.
- Need to criticize the system. For many countries, especially the receivers of the aid, it is difficult to criticise the aid system, because of fear of the consequences. People working with large seed aid agencies that have significant revenue streams which originate from 'emergency seed aid' are not in a position to criticise their agencies work. This is the case right now for FAO as the amount of money that FAO receives for emergency seed aid is staggering.

## **6.2 SUMMARY OF GROUP WORK 2: ESTABLISHING BASIC NORWEGIAN "BETTER PRACTICE PRINCIPLES" FOR SEED RELIEF AND REINFORCING SEVERAL OF NORWAY'S SPECIAL ROLES IN PREPAREDNESS**

Representatives from civil society, MFA, research institutions and Norad met on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2008 ('the Seminar') to discuss seed security as a means of prevention of humanitarian disasters. The Seminar concluded and recommends as follows:

### **6.2.1 Regarding the UN/FAO Principles – and Norway’s View**

1. The Seminar agrees to the list of 9 points by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), and recommends Norway to actively use and apply these. (FAO Guiding Principles for Seed Relief- Box 1);
2. However, we might expand on the ‘Do No Harm- related to White Paper e.g. – we might expand the gender and the empowerment and local capacity-building sections (It is critical also to say ‘what not to do’);
3. In international fora, the Seminar recommends Norway to communicate these principles and what they mean;
4. For our embassies and partner organizations, we, Norway, have to be clear about what we support and what we expect in terms of seed aid. In-house we should live up to our own words;
5. We tend to be ‘reactive’ in emergency (e.g. flash appeals), but we should be more proactive in the early stages (Linking Relief with Development) Seed system support is an ideal linking mechanism (early and ‘proactive’) where hunger is the issue;
6. We recommend that about 10% of the Emergency budget be used for this early ‘Proactive/Early recovery work (including Linking Relief with Development). (About \$30 million NOK);
7. As test cases for moving forward, we might program seed system security assessments (SSSA) – MFA would ask NORAD to take this forward. MFA needs guidance from NORAD on possible seed insecurity sites (especially chronic sites), e.g. Sudan;
8. Question: should NGOs organize themselves to demand that SSSA (Seed system security assessment) be done in countries, regions affected by chronic crisis or should Norad ask NGOs to program a SSSA in their long term projects?

### **6.2.2 Regarding the Checklist**

Practice Brief number 10 “Developing a Seed-Aid Proposal: A Rapid Review Checklist for Practitioners” (Sperling *et al.* 2006) (attached in section 4).

1. Norway should have a checklist;
2. It is handy to have one page format, very good;
3. The general content of the current checklist is good (and is highly in accordance with the MFA/NORAD Development Cooperation Manual’s sustainability criteria);
4. We have a single additional qualification in reference to the checklist. It should be reviewed with new developments of the White Paper in mind. MFA recommends that NORAD organizes this review;
5. Projects should be required to show that they have used the checklist (used as cover sheet when submitting proposals). The responsibility to ensure that projects have complied to design features recommended in the checklist should be on those submitting projects, not on the MFA or NORAD managers.

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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: PARTICIPANT LIST

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## **ANNEX 2: INVITATION TO THE WORKSHOP**

### **“Moving from emergency seed aid to seed security - Linking relief with development”**

Wednesday May 14th, 2008, NORAD conference room, 4<sup>th</sup> floor , Ruseløkkveien 26, Oslo

Caritas and the Drylands Coordination Group (DCG) hereby invite you to participate in a one day workshop on “Moving from emergency seed aid to seed security: linking relief with development”. Hosted by NORAD, the workshop will take place on May 14, 2008 (tentative program is attached.)

The workshop is organized as an immediate response to the Norwegian White paper on preparedness for humanitarian catastrophes (Stortingsmelding nr. 9 (2007-2008). It states that “As with distribution of food, the distribution of seeds can also have negative effects on local food security” and that the Norwegian government “will distance itself from international dumping of food and seeds in vulnerable countries and contribute to more debate regarding the effects of substantial seed distribution” (p. 37, our translation”).

Related to its recent endorsement of the White paper, the Parliament has asked the government to develop guidelines for seed aid. The purpose of the workshop is to communicate state-of-the-art advances in seed aid understanding and assessment (including concrete tools for better practice), to promote guides for more effective proposal development and to share experiences and identify needs for building a more sustainable Norwegian emergency response capacity. The workshop will provide a forum for frank exchange among policy-makers, donors, program managers, and humanitarian practitioners working from Norway, in the field in Africa, and elsewhere where emergency aid is being implemented on important scales.

Humanitarian organizations often respond to crisis by distributing free seeds to farmers. Such Direct Seed Distribution (DSD) has often been presented as more sustainable than food distribution. However, new studies and field experience show that uncritical seed distribution often has not been effective in helping vulnerable farmers and that the approach can have negative impacts at the local level, such as undermining of coping strategies or of local markets. We should now be aiming to support activities in emergency situations that help mitigate the immediate problem but that also promote the rehabilitation of stressed systems. Hence the workshop focus on linking relief to development.

The workshop will be facilitated by Louise Sperling of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). We do hope you will join us for these strategic discussions on Emergency seed aid and seed security.

Please register for the workshop at [dcg@drylands-group.org](mailto:dcg@drylands-group.org) or 23 10 94 90.

With kind regards,

Astrid Tveteraas, DCG 22 99 94 90  
Sigrid Nagoda, Caritas 92 01 05 65

## ANNEX 3: PROGRAM

### **Moving from emergency seed aid to seed security: linking relief with development**

08.30-08.45 *Coffee, registration*

#### Welcome and Overview

- 08:45- 09:00 Welcome Astrid Tveteraas, Drylands Coordination Group
- 09:00-09.20 Welcome: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Special Advisor, Bjørn Johannessen  
Norwegian governments' existing policy and expectations for workshop  
(Str. meld. 9 (2007-208))
- 09.20- 09:50 Emergency Seed aid: overview of field  
Louise Sperling, International Center for Tropical Agriculture
- 09:50-10:20: Discussion
- 10:20-10.40 Coffee/tea break

#### NGO Experiences with Seed Aid

- 10:40- 11:10 Market-based approaches to Emergency  
Stephen Walsh, Catholic Relief Services
- 11:10-11:20 Discussion
- 11:20-11:40 Participant sharing of other approaches currently being implemented by Norwegian agencies  
in the field.

#### Better Practice Tools

- 11:40-12:10 Updates of tools which may help managers and organizations move to more effective  
responses a) seed security framework b) assessment guide and c) seed aid practice briefs
- 12:10-12:30 Discussion
- 12:30-13:15 Lunch

#### Working Groups

- 13:15 15:00 Working Groups  
1. Linking relief to development (serving the vulnerable in disaster periods)  
2. Establishing Norwegian "better practice principles and proposal development checklists".
- 15:00-15:15 Coffee/tea break
- 15:15-15:45 Feedback from the Working Groups
- 15:45-16:00 Next steps
- 16:00 Summary and Closure (NORAD/MFA)

## **ANNEX 4: WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES**

### **Seed Aid for Seed Security: Promoting Better Practice in Disaster Response:**

#### **Working Group 1: Linking Relief to Development (serving the vulnerable in disaster periods)**

1. Review of Practical Approaches on the Ground (what works where and when)
2. Devising of Strategy for Capacity Building to Promote Better Practice
  - How to strengthen capacity to use range of disaster response approaches
  - How to promote (and build capacity for seed security assessment)
  - How to promote ‘learning’ evaluations’
  - Explore current constraints/opportunities for implementing effective practice in your respective organizations.

For each item, map the issues of  
what exactly is needed (what is the goal)  
the first five steps for reaching that goal

*(The focus here would be on field practitioners: how to improve field practice. Where do organizations want to go—what do they need to get there)*

#### **Working Group 2: Establishing Basic Norwegian “Better Practice principles” for Seed Relief and reinforcing several of Norway’s special roles in preparedness**

##### Principles: Normative (such as the FAO principles)

- Explore the rationale for such principles in Norway (also to influence the EU)
- The process for setting such principles
- The initial content of such principles

##### Checklist for promoting better seed aid proposals & implementation (such as Brief 10)

- Explore the rationale for a checklist (for Norad, MFA, and NGO managers)
- The process for devising such a checklist
- The initial content of a checklist
- Using such a checklist in proposal screening

*The focus here would be on policy makers and on leveraging Norway’s forward looking principles to influence the broader EU.*



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