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Overview

- Views regarding appropriate responses to emergency needs are in a state of flux. There is a sense that existing assessments of needs, and responses to those needs are:
  - Excessively ad hoc
  And
  - Overly reliant on food assistance
- Improving needs assessments and responses by bilateral and multilateral agencies and governments has a number of components.
- One of these is a conceptual framework for thinking about appropriate responses. This presentation outlines some preliminary thoughts on this.
Objectives of emergency responses

- Save lives

- Prevent irreversibilities. For example
  - Preventing malnutrition from causing permanent cognitive deficits
  - Ensuring households are not forced to sell off critical productive assets, go deeply into debt or otherwise fall into a poverty trap
  - Avoiding the destruction of community mechanisms for risk sharing
  - Preventing the bankruptcy or exit of traders

- Comment: Preventing irreversibilities means that appropriate emergency responses are integral to the success of broader development efforts

Possible Conceptual Framework

- Four components:
  - Settings
  - Assets
  - Activities
  - Consumption

- Settings are the broader environment in which a household is situated:
  - Physical
  - Social
  - Political
  - Legal
  - Economic
Framework, cont’d

• Households hold assets in various forms, capital (physical, natural, human, financial, social) and labor

• They allocate these assets to activities (agriculture, wage work, non-agricultural own business activities) which generate income. Income is also obtained via transfers both private (remittances) and public

• Income is used to acquire consumption goods (eg food) and to make investments (eg education). Prices have a significant effect here as do complementary publicly provided goods (roads, schools).

Emergencies

• Emergencies arise from exogenous changes in settings. Examples:
- Physical (drought, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes)
- Social (ethnic strife, civil war)
- Legal (collapse of governance)

• These shocks affect assets, activities and consumption via, for example:
- Destruction/damage of productive assets
- Loss of returns (fall in returns to labor; inability to acquire complementary inputs; inability to enforce contracts)
- Increases in prices of consumption goods (eg food)
- Destruction/damage of assets needed for consumption
- Destruction/damage of publicly provided goods (roads, schools)
Implications for emergency responses
("Guidelines for guidelines")

In assessing the appropriate response to an emergency, a framework such as this can be used to pose the following questions:

- What caused the crisis?
- What did it affect?
- Who did it affect? How severely?
- How do other settings function (e.g., markets, banking system, governance)?
- How much time is there to respond?
- How will the response affect settings, assets and activities?