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Towards a Conceptual Approach to Integrating Markets, Livelihoods, and Entitlement Needs in the Identification of Appropriate Emergency Response Options

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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 hocAnd
 - 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 (eg markets, banking system, governance)?
- How much time is there to respond?
- How will the response affect settings, assets and activities?

