

1. Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.
2. El Niño is fuelling a global food security crisis. The worst is yet to come, surpassing countries' capacities to cope. As a global community we have the opportunity to respond collectively and ensure that development achievements are not lost.
3. The World Food Programme is working with national governments to sound the alarm and rapidly scale up relief operations to assist vulnerable communities. With governments, we are tailoring emergency responses to local needs, including the provision of emergency food and cash transfers to buy food.
4. In Ethiopia for instance WFP, together with the Government's National Disaster Risk Management Commission, is assisting 7.6 million people in need of food assistance through both cash and food transfers.
5. In all affected countries, we are providing specialized nutrition support to prevent malnutrition in pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and young children.
6. In addition to responding to immediate needs, WFP is investing in preparedness and resilience-building. We all realise that the impact and cost of relief operations can be mitigated through early interventions.
7. For instance in Zimbabwe, participants receive training in climate-smart agriculture such as water-harvesting and irrigation systems, in order to qualify for WFP food or cash assistance.
8. Last year we launched the Food Security Climate Resilience Facility (or FoodSECuRE), which gives us the flexibility to release funding before disasters occur. FoodSECuRE allows WFP to help communities take action 3 to 6 months before a drought and weeks ahead of floods and storms.
9. Another example I wanted to share is WFP's close collaboration with African Risk Capacity (ARC) – an insurance pool that diversifies weather risk across its 7 member countries so far (Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal). This group approach lowers the cost of the response to disasters, before they become humanitarian crises, and provides better services to those affected.
10. Donors have been generous in supporting life-saving assistance operations but more needs to be done – and done urgently. Humanitarians are stretched financially in all the affected countries as the impact of El Niño translates into increased food needs. In Ethiopia alone, WFP urgently requires US\$570 million to meet the needs of drought-affected people this year.
11. It is only through multi-year funding that we can build vulnerable people's long-term resilience to climate disasters. This is especially true in the most food insecure communities and countries facing recurrent shocks. Multi-year funding is also key to ensuring linkages between humanitarian and development approaches.
12. El Niño threatens decades of development progress by making communities less able to absorb and adapt to a changing climate. The effects of El Niño will be felt through generations unless resilience is at the centre of our responses.
13. I thank you for your kind attention.