



Feed the Future Stakeholder Meeting

Efforts to Enhance Resilience in the Horn of Africa

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Presentation Transcript

Presenters:

Nancy Lindborg, USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance

Gregory C. Gottlieb, USAID Bureau for Food Security

Susan Fine, USAID Bureau for Africa

Jeff Hill, USAID Bureau for Food Security

Moderator:

Zachary Baquet, Knowledge Management Specialist, USAID Bureau for Food Security

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Zachary Baquet:

Welcome everyone. My name is Zachary Baquet. I'm the Knowledge Management Specialist for the Bureau for Food Security. I'd like to welcome you to today's Feed the Future Stakeholder Meeting on "Efforts to Enhance Resilience in the Horn of Africa." This event is sponsored by the Bureau for Food Security on behalf of the Feed the Future Initiative. Please silence or turn off any cell phones - turn them to vibrate or what have you so that we don't have interruptions during the talks. I would also ask that you hold questions till the end where we'll do the Q and A. This is because we have a large online audience as well, currently at around 76 participants and so if you ask a question without a mic, they can't actually hear what you're trying to say. When asking questions during the Q and A, we request that you identify yourself and your organization before asking your question. This is again, also, to help that online audience be able to feel a part of the event.

In 2011, the Horn of Africa faced the worst drought it has seen in 60 years. While we can't prevent these cyclical droughts, we can build community resilience to lessen their impacts. As such, recent efforts have focused on how country, regional level and donor programming can better align to enhance resilience in this vulnerable region. This event – today's event – will go over the following five efforts. The first one is USAID's process for linking humanitarian assistance in development programs to enhance resilience in the Horn. Number two is recent African leadership efforts including the government of Kenya – hosted a September summit of IGAD and EAC ministers and heads of state focusing on long term solutions on drought and famine. Three is USAID's and World Bank's joint program design process focusing on resilient programming in the dry lands of Kenya and Ethiopia. Number four is the launch of a technical consortium of research and development partners to support country led and regional program design and five is a conference for high level development partners to be held this March 28th and 29th in Nairobi entitled "Resilience and Growth in the Horn: Enhanced Partnership for Change."

With that, I'm gonna do a brief introduction for all four of our distinguished speakers today and then we'll have them come up and speak one at a time and then we'll open it up for Q and A. Our first speaker is Nancy Lindborg who is the assistant administrator for DCHA – the Democracy Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau within USAID. Nancy has spent the last 14 years as – prior to this, Nancy spent the last 14 years as president of Mercy Corps, non-governmental organization that helps people in the world's toughest places turn the crises of natural disaster, poverty and conflict into opportunities of progress.

She is also a member of the Council on Foreign Affairs and was a member of the USAID advisory committee on voluntary foreign aid. From 2000 to 2005, she was chair of the Sphere Management Committee on International Initiative to improve the effectiveness of accountability of NGO's.

Following Nancy in speaking is going to be Gregory Gottlieb, the senior deputy assistant administrator for USAID's Bureau for Food Security where he oversees development activities associated with Feed the Future, the US government's food security initiative. He most recently served as the mission director in Namibia in August of 2008. Prior to his assignment in Namibia, he served as senior deputy assistant administrator of USAID's DCHA bureau. He has more than 25 years of experience with the US government, NGOs and the UN primarily in the field of humanitarian relief.

Susan Fine is the director of the office of East African Affairs in USAID's Africa Bureau where she oversees programs in the Horn of Africa and the great lakes countries. Senior Foreign Service officer, she has extensive experience planning and managing international development programs. She was most recently the deputy mission director responsible for Southern Sudan during Southern Sudan's historic self-determination referendum and subsequent transition to independence. Prior to that, she guided program policy in USAID's office of the Chief Operating Officer and served as Director of Strategic Planning and Operations in the bureaus of Asia and the Middle East.

And finally, we have Jeff Hill who has many years of experience in African agricultural development and currently serves in USAID's recently created Bureau for Food Security. At USAID, he has been a team leader for a number of agriculture and food security initiatives for the Africa bureau and now for BFS. He presently works on the Feed the Future initiative and prior to that worked on many programs that promoted agricultural growth and built on African lead partnerships to cut hunger and poverty. He has designed, led and managed a variety of teams of research, private sector development, trade, capacity building and policy. He currently chairs the Donor Development Partners CAADP group and process – a group of 32 donors worldwide dedicated to African agricultural development. And with that, I would ask Nancy to come up and speak.

Nancy Lindborg:

Hi everybody. Good morning. Thanks for coming out on a sort of gray morning and welcome to all of those who are online. Is this streaming or online? Okay. It's great to be here. I actually just got off a plane late last night having been in the Sahel for the last 10 days where we're working hard to apply a lot of the lessons of the Horn in what we see as a rising crisis in the Sahel. And my trip actually started with a meeting in Rome that I think was really rather unprecedented and underscores what I think is the really changing conversation and changing way that we approach this chronic crisis challenge. And in Rome, there was a meeting on the margins of the world's food program board meeting with the heads of most of the UN agencies, both UNDP, WFP, FAO, IFAD was there, USAID EU. And all of us collectively pledged that we would take early action now in response to the early warning indicators that we were seeing in the Sahel and link our emergency response with longer-term development and do so in a way that built resilience.

This is the playbook that came out, I think, of the Horn and the magnitude of the crisis in the Horn, I think, really helped to focus what we all know is what we want to do and what we need to do and what a lot of people listening in and in this room have been striving to do for a very long time and what is very powerful, I think, about what is happening now and the opportunity that the resilience approach gives us is that it gets us past that continued vocabulary of relief to development, closing the gap, is it a continuum? Because we know that, as Zach said in the intro, that we are not gonna stop these droughts. And in both the Horn and in the Sahel, what we're seeing is what used to be a 10 year cycle, then a five year cycle, now it's really every other year. And as a result, these vulnerable populations – mainly pastoralists and rain fed small agro-pastoralist – absolutely cannot recover from cycle to cycle of drought and they keep tipping over into what is already a very vulnerable place, but into serious crisis. And we mobilize.

We mobilize because that's what we do as Americans, as global citizens. And the world did an amazing mobilization in the Horn of Africa and I think we can, and should be, proud of what everyone did in terms of enabling those communities, especially those in Somalia who were actually in famine, which is something we really don't get to very often, pull back. And it's not over by any means. It's still very fragile. But we have seen that it made a difference. What we also did – and we really built on a lot of the work that had started after the food price hike crisis of 2008 – is we had put in programs that were emergency in nature but the way they were designed, they built resilience. They were –

and many of you were part of that and you know this very well. It was helping livestock to be healthier. It was improving the pasturelands and the grazing practices. It was creating alternative livelihoods, especially for women. It was creating irrigated dry season crops so that they could survive the poor seasons.

And all of those programs, we were able to layer on and extend and do more along with what we're doing with our food aid programs, which is, I think, a true transformation of our Food for Peace office. We've moved into far greater flexibility on the kinds of approaches that we use with an increased emphasis on cash and vouchers, local and regional purchase so that we're able to be sensitive to the markets and very importantly, we're reformulating our commodities after a two-year effort which many of you were involved with. And Tufts University really led the thinking of that. We've reformulated for more nutritious products that can really be targeted at those first of thousand days when it's so important that young babies get the kind of nutrition that can help their brains develop.

So, in the Horn of Africa, over the last eight months, I think all of us have been very engaged in trying to insure that we put in the kind of humanitarian response that is flexible, that has a lighter footprint than what sometimes happens in emergencies and that builds resilience, even as we meet urgent needs. At AID we went one step further and we developed something called Joint Planning groups because we know that time after time we mobilize for an emergency response and then those efforts end and there's a long gap before the development side kicks back in and so the challenge is to knit those together. And with our Joint Planning groups, in Ethiopia and Kenya, the missions sat together with our humanitarian colleagues from Food for Peace and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and planned – starting last summer. And said, “Okay, we want to start laying on these kinds of programs looking at ways to either sequence, to integrate or to layer what we do in the emergency response with how we can connect up with the longer term so that we really create resilience from all sides of our programs and enable communities to not continue to be at such a vulnerable point of crisis that they're tipped over every time that we have these inevitable shocks.”

We are in the process of moving forward with those plans. We are also looking at, “So what really works?” What is the evidence for these strategies being successful? And again, I want to thank those of you who participated in the workshop that we held on December 13th on beginning to gather the evidence

for successful strategies to build resilience and also to move us towards a common framework of understanding “What does the word mean?” and what's in that frame when we talk about resilience. We are looking to have the results of that conversation, that two-day workshop, towards the end of March and look forward to talking with you all again at that point. Most importantly, we're looking at an event at the end of March – March 28/29 – that Greg will talk more about on resilience and growth and working, as we pledged to do in Rome just a week ago in the Sahel context. The March event is to enable us to work across the relief to development of divide and have coherence among all the donors and do so in a way that is aligned with country plans.

So these are efforts that many of us have all talked about. This – I think the gravity of the crisis of the Horn, followed now by a rising crisis in Sahel, is a very focusing moment. And the kinds of different approaches that we're seeking to do at USAID and do so in partnership with you and the other donors, I think give us an extraordinary opportunity to truly move this into the next stage. So thank you all for coming and I'm handing it over to Greg. Greg Gottlieb. Thank you.

Greg Gottlieb:

It's a pleasure to be here. I think I have a couple of slides, actually. Maybe. Somewhere. I'll get to this in a bit, but I just wanted to comment a little bit on what Nancy said about what's going on in the Horn of Africa. For those of you who've spent many years of your career working there, you know that over the years we've made some progress on things. We've talked a lot about relief and development. After, I think – my first time out there was almost 30 years ago, so I think that we've made some good steps this time around in USAID. I'm just trying to bring together our relief side and our development side almost for us, really unprecedented, because we had people actually sitting together trying to take our disaster programs, take them through to transition and then put them back into it in development, which is something we haven't done in the past. Which has been one of the real area's we've missed in the development side where a lot of our good humanitarian transition type programs ended and there was nothing else to pick them up, particularly in those arid areas of Kenya and Ethiopia and elsewhere that many of us have worked in for a long time. So I want to come back to that a little bit later and talk a little bit about – and I'll get to that slide when I do that.

What I wanted to talk about a little bit was just the Feed the Future and the components of that effort and how we think it relates to what we're doing in

the Horn in terms of humanitarian assistance and how that then leads into this conference that we're planning for the end of March. So many of you have heard of this before but Feed the Future is presidential initiative on reducing hunger and poverty. And you know, we sort of come at it from five different components. One, there's a production component, both in agricultural, livestock and it could be in horticulture and other aspects of it. We have a value chain approach. That is, we're trying to generate more value in those products. More jobs along the line. So for those people that aren't necessarily producers anymore but they're part of that chain, they can then have something to do. They can earn income through it. For instance, like in Southern Tanzania, we have the Southern Corridor effort, so that is a production corridor which has processing, which has manufacturing, which has warehousing. So the effort is to try to expand the jobs that are around agriculture production.

Nutrition. As Nancy mentioned, nutrition's a huge component of what we're trying to do in the sense that we are trying to make the diet a better one. We've focused for many, many years in our health programs on micronutrients. We're trying to expand that so that we can focus on a better diet. So it's producing more nutritious foods. And it's obviously with things that many of you have worked on over the years, probably. Trying to get people to consume better foods. So that's another component.

Markets is another aspect. We've talked about this, I think, several times in appearances here. We have a whole unit devoted to trying to see if we can't do better resilience through working with the private sector. A lot of times in the past, we've really looked at the philanthropic side of private sector, which wasn't all that sustainable. Sometimes the money just ran out. It was for a very limited time. But trying to take a look at the private sector to see what's in their longer-term interest but also in the longer-term interest of the communities. I think a lot of times we've talked about the private sector as if it's only gonna effect the upper echelons of the society and what we're trying to do is bring the private sector to where those who really need more agricultural production, who can really benefit from that, are gonna be able to participate in that. So that's another big point for us.

And finally, research is a huge component for us. The administrator is very keen on looking in the area of drought resilient crops. Very pertinent to the Horn. Very important for, I think, what we're seeing in terms of – well, it's raining

today, but there ya go. But in terms of climate and what we're seeing happen across many parts of the world in which we work. So we want to take our research budget and shift it to trying to make out our leaves, seeds, more drought resilient. Big issue for us and one that I think will pay off in big dividends in the future.

Cross cutting issues for us. Always looking at the gender issue. For the first time we have an initiative – well, the first time in many years – specifically directed at women to bring women scientists from Africa back to the states or other universities to increase their education. And also, then to send them back to their countries to bring the kinds of education and knowledge that's needed to help FTF programs succeed. We used to do this back in the 60s and 70s. Those programs tapered off. We're now resuming that seeing that there's a great benefit in doing so.

Climate resilience. I talked about crops like that. There's also a major presidential initiative on climate so we're trying to stay linked up with that and make sure that our projects that we do out in our countries are taking cognition of that. Water and health, two other big components for us. Obviously, water is becoming increasingly important issue for us. Obviously, in the Horn, it's something many of your groups have focused on. It's something we have focused on. We are looking at the types of crops that make better use of less water and that will be an important component given that agriculture consumes about 70 percent of all the world's water.

So let me just switch back to the Horn a bit and what Nancy was talking about. What we tried to do in our work here is to join together, as Nancy said, our relief and our development work. We tried to come together around how we manage disasters, how we diversify livelihoods, what could we do to link up the people that we deal with in emergencies with what we're gonna try to do on the trade side. One of the things we've been trying to do for years is early off take for animals. Trying to start that early in a drought so that people get the – the pastoralists get – the most they can out of their animals. What we've begun to see in our work that's helped start a number of ___ in Ethiopia is that it's a lot easier now for pastoralists to access those kinds of markets. So you can see if we move into another drought in another year or two years, the more access the pastoralists have to off take, the easier it's gonna be for them to retain the value of those animals in cash, in their pockets. And knowing that they can sell,

get their cash and as things improve, they can restock themselves as opposed to us restocking them. I think that's a very key issue for us. We've also tried to do this – when you look at cash for food, trying to keep those markets open. So in Feed the Future, as we work in markets, we're trying to have our emergency programs also work in those markets and complement each other. I think that's very important.

This is just a little bit of what we looked at in terms of the dynamics of a pastoralists system and I think for us, what's been really important over the years is to really understand those systems. Tufts University has been a key partner for us in helping us do that. One of the key things we see happening in those communities, some people are benefiting a lot and growing into a more commercial aspect of pastoralism. Very important to understand that because as we look at markets, those people can feed into that better. So what we have to do is to look more carefully at who's moving out of pastoralism and how are we gonna – how will we benefit those people? What kinds of things will we have for them? And that's why we've tried to look at diversification of livelihoods and when we talk about trying to broaden out what we do in Feed the Future along this value chain.

So the final thing I want to talk about is a conference that we are having at the end of March and that is to look at the issue of resilience but also to bring donors together around two – really, two key components. One, a common framework in the Horn of Africa for us to program against. It's being developed by IGAD, the African Union and countries in the region. We've not done this before as donors, been wrapped around a single framework where we were all trying to go down the same tracks together. The second thing we want to do is to develop a donor's group, which has some similarities to the club du Sahel, which has had some great success in the Sahel dealing with drought. The importance of this is to try to bind our field programs with our headquarters policy actions and we hope by doing this, we're gonna be able to, as the next drought approaches, we'll be in a much better position to bring our programs together, help them align so we don't step on each other's toes. So that we can concentrate and focus our researches on places where we think they need to be and where we can just complement each other's programs and make better use of money in what is now, I think, a somewhat difficult budget situation. So I'm gonna stop there and let my next colleague come up.

Susan Fine:

So, good morning and it's good to be here. I thought that I would start out by talking a little bit about the regional context and reflecting back on the fact that we've been through this before. Just a couple of days ago, I came across an assessment of the last major US government response to drought in the Horn of Africa. Many of you were involved in that, the Greater Horn of Africa initiative. And that was roughly the period of 1995 to 2000. And it was really interesting to read it because it reminded me that we're not operating in a vacuum here. We have been working on many of these issues for a long time and it was encouraging for me to see where we've made some progress and also where we haven't made some progress. And also, I think, I'm gonna talk a little bit of how some of the things in the region are different from that previous period.

One of the things that I noted was that the principles of the Greater Horn of Africa initiative are very similar to the ones we're talking about now. African ownership, linking relief and development, the importance of regional approaches. So it's not like we didn't think about this stuff before but obviously we didn't always pull it off and implement it as well as we would have liked to.

This assessment said that one of the principle weaknesses of the strategy at that time was not taking sufficient account or paying sufficient attention to conflicts and dealing with conflicts. And what happened as a result was that the resources that were dedicated to the Greater Horn of Africa initiative were overwhelmingly went towards humanitarian response. And so there was less resources dedicated to development and I think that in turn affected the ability to really focus on this linkage between relief and development. Because there was so much of a focus on the crisis response and humanitarian response and it was – we didn't do a very good job of making that linkage between the humanitarian and the development activities.

Another point that was highlighted was that we didn't do a very good job of emphasizing regional approaches even though that was one of the principles of the strategy. But the implementation of it didn't follow the principles. And I think partly that's because we didn't have such strong regional institutions and that's one of the things that's really changed between that period of time and now. And I'll talk a little bit more about that. I mean, the good news is that that strategy, as well as other donor efforts and African government efforts did recognize the importance of regional approaches and put in place things like

some regional agricultural networks and health networks and conflict networks. But there's still more to be done.

USAID's own development assistance focused primarily on crop production. Of course, there was some variation from country to country depending on the country context. However, focusing on the pastoral areas was difficult for a number of reasons including that many of them were just in a complex emergency situation and it was really very difficult to do very much with respect to pastoralism. By contrast, you just heard Greg talk about the very, very strong focus of the program that we're – the response that we're now talking about towards pastoralism. And the fact that we're able to do that is in part because there is also somewhat less conflict now than there was at that time.

At the time, the African governments themselves recognized the importance of trade liberalization, of creating a better environment for private sector investment and began to work on those issues. They also recognized themselves the importance of regional approaches and organizations. And I think that the situation that we're in today reflects the fact that they recognized and began to work on those things.

So how are things different now? For one thing, for most of the east and central Africa, you've got countries that have – for the last few years – really seen very good economic growth. And that's a very positive setting for this particular initiative. Regional trade has increased and also trade between east African and like, markets in the Middle East has increased. And so those are, I think, very positive factors that bode well for the investments that we're gonna be making now to have greater impact than they may have had in the past.

There are – as I mentioned, there is still conflict in the region, of course. Notably in Somalia but there's a lot of local level conflict in these pastoral areas on the borders. But it's overall less than in that previous period. Also, as I mentioned, there are – the regional institutions that we need to work with to accomplish some of these objectives, with respect to regional trade integration and dealing with regional conflicts, are much stronger than they were at the time. An example of that is, I think, over the last decade, roughly, the African Union has become much, much more active and I note that probably –

somebody was telling me that the African Union has somewhere in the neighborhood of 24 treaties that have been put into force during its lifetime. And 17 of them have been put into force in the last decade; so obviously, it's become more active over time. And quite a number of these treaties are important foundations for resilience. And in addition to treaties, there's various other policy frameworks and things like that that focus on these issues. Notably, the policy framework for pastoralism in Africa, which was approved in January, 2011.

So I think that reflects the fact that there is recognition and a stronger commitment to these kinds of issues on the part of the African countries themselves. IGAD – the Inner Governmental Authority on Development – is taking this issue very seriously. It is not a very strong organization right now. There's a lot of concerns around capacity of IGAD. However, I think that there's also recognition amongst many of the donors that we need this organization and that we need to make a serious commitment to strengthen it, to provide leadership, specifically around these issues of resilience in the Horn.

As you know, and I think Jeff's gonna talk more in detail, IGAD has been leading a process of developing a regional compact building on the compact's in individual countries. I mean, you really can't do that without having a regional organization. IGAD is also involved in the conflict side of the equation. There is a conflict early warning and response mechanism known as CWARN that operates along the borders of Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. And they work with communities and governments to predict conflict over natural resources and other things and help the host – the governments – to be able to respond to those to try and minimize them if possible or at least be ready to respond to them. So you know, there's more capacity now than in the past to deal with some of these conflict issues.

I would also note that the East African community is a much stronger organization now than it was in the past. They established a common market for the East African community in 2010 and there's a lot of work going on within the EAC as well as with COMESA on reducing trade barriers, discouraging protectionism. And these kinds of things are going to be very important in the future in increasing food security. Because even though there is some variability in terms of the impact of drought situations across countries, the

more that you have free flowing regional trade, that can help mitigate some of the impact where you have countries that are less affected.

At the country level, I think we're also seeing increased attention at senior levels of government to these issues, appreciation for them. The most notable example would be the Heads of State Summit that was called in September of last year to address, to discuss response to the drought situation in the Horn. I believe all the heads of state of the IGAD member countries participated in that and they produced a statement that made really very serious commitments. Now of course, it's a statement and we all know that you have to follow up those good words with actions but I think we are also seeing some evidence that those commitments are going to be backed by actions. For example, Ethiopia has a national investment plan that reflects many of the commitments to invest more heavily in the arid and semi-arid lands than it has in the past. So I mean, we'll see that Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda are working right now with donors on various investments and so of course, the jury is still a bit out on how that process plays out but I think there's reason for optimism.

I would also note that – and I think Greg touched on this a little bit as well about the private sector – there are more actors other than the traditional donors and governments now than in the past. Clearly, the role of the private sector has come up and we and African governments and other donors are working more intensively on public/private partnerships. You also have the rise of very substantial foundations, Gates, Buffet who are interested in these issues. You also have the rise of non-traditional donors. Turkey, for example, is becoming a very important development partner in the Horn of Africa and is very interested in being engaged financially but also in terms of policy and what not. So that's a new dynamic. And then you also have – it's small, but still – the rise of African philanthropy. An example of that would be the Kenya for Kenyans initiative that we saw during the response.

So the environment is different. There are many new developments that I think are reason for optimism that this time around that we'll make more progress than we have in the past. So I'll stop there. Thank you.

Zachary Baquet:

Next, we have Jeff Hill.

Jeff Hill:

Thank you, Zachary and good morning to everyone. It's a pleasure to be here. I'm Jeff Hill with the bureau for food security. This morning, I really wanted to actually highlight three things that are currently taking place. These are three sets of actions that are taking place to try to create an integrated effort to really tackle into and eliminate the kind of drought related emergencies in the East African dry land areas. And fundamentally, those three actions that are taking place is joined efforts at a regional level unit that are putting in place a coordinated strategy instead of programs to operate at a regional level to promote the kind of coordination that we've just heard about is so critical and important. The second set of actions is really around the country level efforts that are taking place to try to advance the creation of a common frameworks and a common programming process to insure that we can see some better coordination. And the third set of actions that is taking place is around creating a technical consortium that is aimed at being able to work with and assist countries and the development partners in the issues of program design and project design efforts so that we can them move on quickly with this.

Fundamentally, what these efforts are aimed at doing is to make sure that in in 2012 that we do actually have the programs, the projects and the support in place to allow us to actually tackle this issue of the medium and long term challenges to the elimination of drought related emergencies. At the heart of these efforts, what we are looking at is fundamentally the country and regional led plans. They are creating the architecture. They are creating the umbrella that is allowing for much better coordination among the development partners in the technical community to put in place the kind of support that's really needed and to find a way of being able to make that assistance more effective at being able to achieve the results that we're seeking.

There really is currently, at present, an unprecedented effort as we've already just heard right here of the countries and of the international community to bring to their resources, to tackle this set of issues that has not actually been operating in the way that is needed to address the issues. And at the scale that is needed to actually tackle these issues. So what we see here is a process of being able to create the kind of platform and the coordination to make it work. Very quickly, going through this, as I had said, is that what we do actually see at a regional level is IGAD has been asked by the African Union and asked by its heads of state from the countries in the IGAD region to lead efforts at putting in

place a strategy and a program. And the AU has asked the IGAD to establish a caddup strategy compact, an investment plan that would service the framework to move this agenda forward. So right now, IGAD is in the process of doing that and that we are looking to see that completed and implemented and start implementation of that in 2012 at the country level.

What we do see is that in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, they have in place national strategies and investment plan, the creative framework for being able to address this and the steps are now focused on specific program and project design. So the development community is taking steps of working together with the countries of putting in place those programs. At a regional level, you know, what has been initiated – these are steps that – in January, already there has been a launching of this process at events that took place in Djibouti. Ongoing technical work is taking place. We're looking to May to June to actually have you know, a formally wrapped up plan and strategy in place that would then allow for a deeper discussion about the specific investments that would be adding value to country level actions. That would immediately follow that at a country level. What we do – has been started – is that focusing in those countries that do have a strategy and investment plan in place. A joint planning process has been initiated that is specific project designed to actually clarify what are the parameters of a program. That is consistent with the framework that Greg has laid out there but is informed by the efforts of the country – the region that they will have in place – their common framework for advancing this. That will create really, the architecture for the better dome of coordination and improved effectiveness.

And turning to – recognizing that in fact there is a great need for insuring that these steps that are being taken are really evidenced based. That there is a solid foundation of knowledge and lessons and experiences to advance this. An innovative effort has been put into place to really build a technical consortium and that is aimed at trying to work with the region and the country and draw the expertise and the knowledge from the international, regional and country level efforts to help to truly inform the foundations of this plan as we move forward. This is aimed at addressing, indeed, the integrated efforts of meeting the immediate, the medium and the long-term challenges that are needed. It is an inclusive process that is there. It does include the US based organizations. It includes the CGIR. It includes the NGO community, regional organizations and national agencies that have formally created a network that is built upon much of the learning that has been going on in the region with research and

documenting the experiences of what is working and what hasn't worked with that.

And it is – and as it's moving forward, some of the types of things that it is taking on, it is working with the individual countries in the region and really doing an inventory of some of the experiences that are taking place. Mapping the current situation, creating the baseline information on knowledge, making sure that we have a good knowledge of the different beneficiaries that are in the region. It's examining the impact of alternative, different types of investments and options so that we're able to set priorities. It is working to make sure that we can see the linkages with the policy frameworks and the different types of investment actions that would take place as well as looking at the diversification strategies, the value of pastoral production. It's using tools of cost/benefit analysis et cetera that are taking place here.

So this knowledge platform, this technical consortium is headquartered in Nairobi. It has a secretariat that is being managed by ILRI, which is the International Livestock Research Institute. And has a presence throughout the region and it does have a number of organizations that have formally been brought in to this. And does have explicitly both the flexibility and the space for engaging a wide range of partners to make sure that the experience that is there is able to be brought to the table in advancing these agendas. And really, that, I think I wanted to try to make sure that there was an understanding of those critical actions that are taking place.

What we do see, these are things that are built to help insure that we're getting a good donor coordination and it is able to actually improve the effectiveness of the development assistance that is being targeted for addressing these issues and really, with that, I think that it is time for discussion.

