

Media Update

14 March 2018

WFP

Press Release

Disaster Risk Reduction can protect smallholder farmers, experts say

LAHORE – A new report launched today shows that with adequate investments in disaster risk reduction, small-holder farmers in Punjab could better withstand climate-related shocks. Calling for increased investments in this area, the report advocates for the Rural Resilience-building approach (R4), pioneered by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and OXFAM.

Pakistan ranks amongst the top 10 most climate-vulnerable countries globally, according to the Global Climate Risk Index. Natural disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity, and can have devastating and widespread impacts, as demonstrated by the 2010 floods that affected 20 million people.

“Understanding the potential impact of climate change on food and nutrition security, and the populations most likely to be affected by it, allows us to identify what interventions need to be prioritized to help manage and mitigate the risks,” said Finbarr Curran, WFP’s Country Director in Pakistan.

“The study highlights the vulnerability of the lives and livelihoods of small-holder farmers due to the compounded risks brought on by climate variability. It also provides guidance on innovative risk management strategies designed to enhance resilience to shocks and stresses,” he noted.

Climate change poses severe risks to the agricultural sector, leaving farmers particularly exposed and vulnerable to climate risks. This is especially true for smallholder farmers, who face other challenges including unfavourable terms of trade, extension gaps and productivity challenges.



“An integrated risk management model such as the R4 can help us build the resilience of smallholder farmers against multiple risks and eventually make their yields and livelihoods more secure,” said Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director of the SDPI. ‘Providing risk reduction and transfer support to small farmers is essential,’ he added.

The report, entitled ‘Risk Management Practices of Small Farmers: A Feasibility Study for Introducing R4 - Rural Resilience Initiative in Punjab’, was launched today at the Government’s Planning and Development Department. It was carried out by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Punjab Social Protection Authority, WFP, and OXFAM.

The study assessed the viability of integrated risk management approaches which could be used to enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers in Punjab. Looking at the relevance of WFP and Oxfam’s global R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, the study found the approach to be relevant to the Punjab context. In particular, strategies relating to risk reduction and risk transfer could significantly augment smallholders’ capacities to withstand shocks.

The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative is a strategic partnership between the United Nations World Food Programme and Oxfam America to enable the vulnerable rural households to increase their food and income security in the context of increasing climate risks. The Initiative is built on an innovative model that combines four risk management strategies: disaster risk reduction, micro insurance, access to credit, and savings.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience. Each year, WFP assists some 80 million people in around 80 countries.

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For more information, please contact:

Mahira Afzal, WFP/Islamabad, E-mail: Mahira.Afzal@wfp.org, Mobile: +92
345 8559333

