



INTERNATIONAL PANEL

Lisa Moon, CEO & President, Global FoodBanking Network

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Full speech

Laura GAVINELLI, Moderator

Welcome, welcome everybody. It's my honour to welcome you to this second day of the FEBA Annual Convention 2021. As you probably could have heard from the first panel, we provided some meaningful insights and inputs to FEBA and Food Banks, discussing specific topics on how to proceed, how to boost a more sustainable food system and concentrated on six main topics, as you might have heard right before.

But that's a time to provide a more strategic vision on what will be in the next future and to organise and to optimise the time of this panel. I would like to propose you three rounds. So, to ask you three main questions on which you feel free to react and to tell me your own daily life, your personal experience. Of course, also providing some information coming from your specific organisation. This is the most global and international panel, and I am very happy to open it.

We know that it was a dramatic year and once again, we'll have the chance to hear from you, so from Lars Battle from CAF America, Jacques Vandenschrik, FEBA, Paul Henrys, Feeding America; Lisa Moon, the Global Food Banking Network; and Nicola Dixon, General Mills Foundation, your perspective. Feel free to react to this first question and you're very welcome again.

So, first question I pose to you all is this one.



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Lisa Moon, CEO & President, Global FoodBanking Network

1) **Looking back at 2020, what are the most important lessons learned, challenges and solutions that helped your organisation or your company to face this unexpected year?**

Thank you, so much and good afternoon, to everyone. It's a pleasure to be here with you. To follow on what I think Jacques and Paul have shared, and we all work together very closely, the Global Food Banking Network serves Food Banks in 44 countries, really focused though on Latin America, Asia-Pacific and increasingly in Sub-Saharan Africa. So, when the pandemic began more than a year ago now, we actually saw that our members in Asia were really at the frontlines of this and they have the experience from previous coronaviruses, SARS of course, avian flu, and knew more or less how it might affect the communities. And so, very early on in the pandemic, we were able to benefit from their knowledge and their learnings, which became very important in our global response. Communities that we work with witnessed a lot of the same things that Jacques and Paul have already discussed. You know, essentially prior to the pandemic we knew that one in four people globally faced food insecurity and with this immediate loss in income caused by lockdowns and closures, many places very strongly enforced, there was a significant spike in demand for food relief.

But I wanted to talk a little bit about some of our most important takeaways as an organisation, from this past year, understanding all the disruptions in supply contrasted with the rise in demand and how Food Banks and social service agencies that they support, especially in emerging and developing markets, responded to this. The first takeaway for us was really that the future of humanitarian response, as we consider it globally, has to rest really around the importance of local organisations. You know, prior to, it would be five years ago, I think the data from that, only about 2% of all funds invested globally in humanitarian response went to local organisations. For too long, the international community has really prioritised either UN organisations, which play an absolutely critical role in emergencies, or meta-international organisations to do this work. With the rise in climate change, we're seeing far more natural disasters than we have in the past. There are significantly more conflicts in the world and the time for when we could rely on a small group of international organisations to handle these humanitarian crises truly has passed. And what we really saw is that obviously with the pandemic, you had humanitarian emergencies in many cases occurring in dozens of geographies across the world. And Food Banks were really on the front line of that having to step up, step into a role many times without government support, in a way that they had not been asked to before. So, we saw 91% of the members that we work with, of course saw significant increases in demand. For 65% of the members that we work with, that demand more than doubled. And only five of the foodbanks that we serve benefitted from any partnership with government.

So, it truly was a civil society response to the pandemic and as we think about the learnings of this past year, we just are, A, so incredibly grateful and feel honoured to have the privilege of working with civil society organisations that are providing this vital support in their communities. But our just doubling down on our commitment emphasised how importance it



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is to be investing locally, as we rebuild and as we think about resilience and response in the future.

The second thing that we really learned from the pandemic and this kind of goes back to the comments that Paul made about food supply, most of the organisations that we work with, as Paul had mentioned, similar to the States, relied almost entirely on recovery. And this is incredibly important, about 98% of the food flowing through the Food Banks that we work with was recovery pre-pandemic. During the pandemic it was approximately 16%, just because there was so much disruption in supply chains. But because of the development of infrastructure or frankly the lack thereof, the Food Banks that we work with were not able to take advantage of the supply chain disruptions in many of the ways that they could have had there been greater investment prior to the pandemic. And so, one of the things that we really took away from was that the supply chain disruptions that occurred, we really have to think about much more so, how do we invest in the infrastructure? Not only take food from farm to market but even from there, what about, how do we think about recovery/redistribution, in a much more holistic and systematic way.

So, these were just some of the things that our network is thinking about as we look ahead. Of course, the COVID emergency for Food Banks around the world has not let up. I think all of us, of course, are very aware of the crisis happening in India right now and in many other parts of the world we are seeing a return to closures. And what's challenging is that early on in the pandemic of course there were lockdowns, there was a significant concern about transmission, the risk of transmission, but the case counts were just not what we are seeing now. And so, what we're seeing for example, in an India situation and in the situation in Brazil, some countries in Central America, certainly some countries in South America, the Philippines, is that when you have this widespread transmission it's very, very challenging to continue food distribution because you truly at that point are having incredible risk to your distribution personnel. In some parts of the network, we've seen about a 25% shutdown, for example, in agency partners. They're either not able to continue working with vulnerable populations because of the health risks, or because of the economic contraction they've been forced to close. So, one of the things that we're thinking about too is just how do we make sure that we're able to sustain and rebuild as the crisis persists?

2) **What are the key aspects or elements that you see in the future of your organisation?**

First, I just want to echo what Nicola, I think, said just about the incredible innovation of Food Banks that we've seen especially in our networks, and I'm so encouraged. You know, about 25% of the GFN network is made up of Food Banks that were founded in the last five years, and they're located in places that traditionally have far less developed civil society organisation. They obviously have very small budgets going into this, you know, with not as stable support as you would have if you're, as an established organisation, but they have done amazing things. Within this group most have doubled their service delivery during the pandemic, and they are sustaining that level of support more than a year in. So, as a new organisation, we are committed to supporting new Food Banks in high-need communities, primarily those in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes working with our existing partners, but also in thinking about how do we come alongside entrepreneurs that want to be part of the



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solution to hunger with/for their neighbours, their families, their friends? Since the start of the pandemic, we've received more than 100 enquiries from more than 30 countries of people wanting to start Food Banks. So, we're thinking through how do we best service and support those individuals, those organisations that want to take on this important work as we rebuild.

Second, we're also committed to helping established organisations reach more vulnerable communities. Whether this is in Colombia, where there is an amazing Food Banking network that is opening new distribution sites along the Venezuelan border to provide service to displaced persons. Or in Brazil, where Mesa Brazil, which experienced a 50% budget cut at the start of the pandemic, rapidly increased its service delivery in spite of that and they continue to serve very remote communities, such as indigenous persons in the Amazon. Or in India where our courageous partners there are continuing relief in a hundred cities. So, these are the types of groups that are serving very high-need communities. They're established organisations, at this point they just need support to help scale.

A third focus for us is around schools and as schools open up in certain parts of the world, you know, it's going to be such an important priority to make sure that we're able to get children back into school. In many places there's increased financial pressure on families, perhaps their parents are in the informal workforce, and there's pressure to keep children at home to provide domestic care or take care of domestic work so, or even earn income. And providing meals at school provides such a valuable resource to compel families to send their kids back. So, in our network Food Banks in 24 countries are involved with school feeding and as schools reopen, we really want to think about how we can be providing key support there so that families send their kids back to school and send their girls back to school, in particular.

In fourth, we are just going to have to continue to have a major focus on food sourcing. Last year, GFN made about 200 emergency grants. We granted nearly 10 times more than we ever had at GFN and for the grants onto our members about half of those funds went to food purchase. So, with demand continuing to be very high even as we, you know, rebuild, reopen, you still have an enormous, you know, number of people that have lost income or continue to be underemployed. We've really got to think about, you know, how are we going to sustain product so that we can provide diverse offerings to those that need it?

- 3) **FEBA Annual Convention is a recognised UN Food Systems Independent Dialogue and this is a very precious occasion to ask you this question, what message would you like to share as a contribution to the United Nations Food Systems Summit, which is organized for sure for this year? So, what's the message you would like to share with the UN Food Systems Summit?**

Yes. So, just echoing what Paul and Jacques have said, you know just the important role that governments play, specifically in providing social protection. I mean, Food Banks provide incredible support, but the reality is that their efforts in no way alone can do this and that, especially in a world- I think that the International Labour Organisation estimates that one in two people have no access to social protection, which means that those needs are falling



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entirely on civil society. That's something that absolutely has to be rectified and needs to be part of a food systems response to the hunger crisis.

The second thing is, is that the UN Food Systems could make recommendations that governments embrace policy changes that make it easier to donate food than it is to throw it away. And this could be everything from liability protection at the national level to incentives to donate surplus products, which exist in far too places, far few places. And so, with those types of interventions, Food Banks would be able to have access to so much more of this surplus food that is wholesome and edible and help get it into the hands of people that need it.

The third thing is that there's already discussions at the G7, the G20 level of how we can come together as a global community to support recovery and rebuilding. And very much so as part of these packages, as part of official development systems, as part of investment platforms, there is indeed a Zero Hunger fund that comes out of the UN Food Systems Summit. I would just encourage those that are organising it to consider Food Banks as a key partner in those endeavours. They are already providing so much support in their communities, they act as voices for those that are often invisible in society. And they're networks and their work can be such an asset as we think about how we create this hunger-free future.