3. Promoting Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRR/DRM)

As part of its mandate, REOWA promotes initiatives and activities designed to strengthen the resilience, disaster risk reduction and management capacities of the food security and agricultural sectors in the region.

Within FAO, the Office provides strategic advice and supports the programmatic, technical and operational activities of FAO’s country offices in the region to strengthen the resilience of agro-pastoral systems. On a broader level, the Office is closely involved in defining and monitoring the implementation of FAO’s regional strategies for resilience, notably the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategy for Africa West/Sahel (2011-2013) and its dissemination through FAO’s country offices at national level. In close collaboration with the relevant FAO offices and Divisions, REOWA participated in the elaboration of the 2012 Response Programme to the Sahel crisis and contributes to the Multiannual Resilience Programme for Sahel.

REOWA also shares its expertise in DRR/DRM and resilience with regional partners. Within the framework of the FAO-WFP Joint Roadmap on DRR/DRM, REOWA organizes, along with the relevant FAO Country offices and WP Regional Office, training sessions on risk management for communities and national partners to enhance their resilience to shocks. Moreover, REOWA ensures that the needs related to livelihoods and food security are integrated within the resilience strategies elaborated with its partners. REOWA actively contributes, through its technical expertise, to the definition of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the AGRIRISK Initiative, in collaboration with the other relevant offices.

4. Implementing projects to protect, restore and improve livelihoods and food security

By the end of 2013, FAO was implementing 67 DRR/DRM and resilience projects in 13 west African countries for a total of USD 90 million. These activities are partially funded on FAO’s own funds but mainly through contributions from donors who are key partners to support vulnerable communities. REOWA regularly informs donors of the needs of vulnerable communities in the region and key intervention areas to support them at regional and country level in order to identify common collaboration areas.

FAO activities to improve the food and nutrition security and the resilience of vulnerable populations in the region include:

- Distribution of seeds, fertilizers and small equipment to farmers, who also benefit from trainings in agricultural techniques, seed multiplication and trade and organizational capacity building;
- Strengthening the resilience of herders through the recapitalization of livestock (distribution of small ruminants), livestock de-stocking, fodder distribution, and animal health risks management;
- Promoting community and school gardens, coupled with nutrition education sessions and cooking demonstrations using local nutritious foods.

In order to sustainable enhance the resilience of vulnerable households, these activities are coupled with seed system security assessments and the implementation of best practices for the sustainable management of natural resources, especially water (rehabilitation of storage dams, water points, promotion of agricultural practices of Zai type, half-moons, small dikes, anti-salt dikes, etc...), biomass and soil fertility (rehabilitation of grazing areas, promotion of useful trees and organic manure, etc.).

In the West Africa and Sahel region, millions of vulnerable people who depend on the production, marketing and consumption of crops, livestock, fish, forests and other natural resources are confronted by recurring disasters and crises. These shocks undermine their livelihoods and threaten their food and nutrition security.

Drought, floods, the locust threat, socio-political instability or rising food prices exacerbate the structural weaknesses of countries in this region, known for its high poverty rate and population growth.

It is crucial to break the vicious cycle of crises by proactively building the capacities of agricultural and pastoral communities to cope with these shocks. As part of its objectives to increase the resilience of livelihoods from disasters, FAO protects, restores and strengthens the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable populations, in collaboration with national and regional partners.

FAO’s Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa/Sahel (REOWA) was created in Dakar in 2006 to enable FAO to liaise and coordinate with humanitarian actors at regional level. The Office also provides strategic humanitarian guidance for FAO’s country offices in the sub-region.

José Luis Fernández | Coordinator
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
15, rue Calmette x rue Amadou Assane Ndoye | BP N° 3300 | Dakar, Senegal
Tel.: (+221) 33 889 16 22 | Fax: (+221) 33 889 16 70 | www.fao.org/crisis/sahel/en/
Increase the resilience of livelihoods from disasters in West Africa and the Sahel

FAO has identified key focus areas to respond as best as possible to the changes of the agricultural sector and the challenges faced by its member countries. An in-depth review of the comparative advantages of the Organization helped to define the strategic objectives on which current FAO efforts are concentrating to carry out its mandate and achieve its global objectives, e.g.: 

1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods from disasters

In West Africa and the Sahel, REOWA contributes to the achievement of these objectives, with particular focus on the Strategic Objective 5. The limited resilience of households to crises regularly endangers and sometimes destroys their livelihoods and any development progress achieved through years of efforts. Humanitarian emergencies in particular threaten food production and access to food.

Key activities of FAO in West Africa and the Sahel region include: building the capacity of families, communities and institutions to anticipate, absorb and mitigate the effects of disasters and crises, and to ensure a timely, efficient and sustainable recovery.

FAO’s work focuses on resilience and in particular on developing, protecting and restoring sustainable livelihoods so that the integrity of societies that rely on farming, livestock, fishing, forests and other natural resources is not threatened by crises. It uses a “two-track” approach:

- on the one hand taking immediate steps to protect and support agriculture, food and nutrition,
- and on the other addressing in the longer term the underlying factors driving risks, disasters and crises.

For FAO, resilience to shocks is based on four complementary and multisectoral pillars:

1. Prepare and respond to crisis
2. Go to the roots of vulnerability
3. Watch to safeguard
4. Apply prevention and mitigation measures

1. For enhanced coordination at the regional level

In order to enhance the efficiency of activities to strengthen food security, FAO’s Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa-Sahel (REOWA) works closely with the regional offices of the United Nations System based in Dakar, non-governmental organizations, Red Cross Movement, FEWS NET, donors and sub-regional organizations.

The Office works closely with partners, such as CILSS2 and takes part in the meetings of the PREGEC3 and the RPCA4. These forums bring together the relevant stakeholders involved in food security in the region in order to analyse the food security and nutrition situation through concerted and coordinated action. FAO supports the implementation and contributes to the AGIR Initiative, which aims to enhance the resilience of the Sahel countries to recurrent food and nutrition crises. This initiative is headed by WAEMU5, ECOWAS6 and CILSS. FAO, in partnership with other UN agencies and NGOs, also collaborates with ECOWAS to strengthen its surge capacity at the onset of humanitarian crises, and participates in the Regional Platform for Disaster Preparedness in West Africa (ECOWAS, Civil Protection, Red Cross and partners).

In terms of coordination and cooperation with United Nations agencies and other technical partners, REOWA represents the Organization and takes part in coordination meetings and joint initiatives in various forums and regional working groups: Humanitarian Coordination IASC, UNDG-WCA7, UNOWA8, UN Integrated Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition, Nutrition, Cash Transfers CALP, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Task Force, Humanitarian Communication, “Mali focus”, “Guinea +”, etc.

REOWA is fully involved in the preparation of the UN Strategies and Humanitarian Appeals launched in the region, and ensures the integration of the FAO component in these appeals. Moreover, as co-chair of the regional food security sector, FAO ensures the quality and consistency of the analysis and the proposed interventions at both national and regional levels.

On a broader level, REOWA supports initiatives designed to assist governments to implement policies and integrated interventions for food security, nutrition and resilience in the region, such as SUN/REACH9, NASAN10, AGIR, etc.

2. An in-depth food security analysis to support decision making and better meet needs

The analysis of the immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity, the capacity to forecast hazards and the early warning of decision makers is critical to protect the food security and the livelihoods of vulnerable communities. REOWA is involved in these activities through:

- The publication of analytical and information notes on food security shared with all the sectoral stakeholders;
- Contributing to food security, nutrition and vulnerability surveys;
- Facilitating and coordinating the participation of FAO to the agricultural production, food security and agricultural market joint assessment missions organized by CILSS with national and regional partners (FEWS NET, WFP, etc.);
- Supporting CILSS to improve the development of the tool for the analysis of the vulnerability of the populations to food insecurity used in the Sahel countries (“Cadre Harmonisé”);
- Supporting capacity building of Early Warning Systems (EWS) in West Africa and the Sahel, by facilitating the organization of regional and national training workshops to put in place or improve methodological tools.

Resilience requires greater coherence and integration of humanitarian, development investment and policy interventions to support local and national institutions and communities, backed up by an efficient global system of well coordinated actors.
Increase the resilience of livelihoods from disasters in West Africa and the Sahel

FAO has identified key focus areas to respond as best as possible to the changes of the agricultural sector and the challenges faced by its member countries. An in-depth review of the comparative advantages of the Organization helped to define the strategic objectives on which current FAO efforts are concentrating to carry out its mandate and achieve its global objectives, e.g.:

1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods from disasters

In West Africa and the Sahel, REOWA contributes to the achievement of these objectives, with particular focus on the Strategic Objective 5. The limited resilience of households to crises regularly endangers and sometimes destroys their livelihoods and any development progress achieved through years of efforts. Humanitarian emergencies in particular threaten food production and access to food.

Key activities of FAO in West Africa and the Sahel region include: building the capacity of families, communities and institutions to anticipate, absorb and mitigate the effects of disasters and crises, and to ensure a timely, efficient and sustainable recovery.

FAO’s work focuses on resilience and in particular on developing, protecting and restoring sustainable livelihoods so that the integrity of societies that rely on farming, livestock, fishing, forests and other natural resources is not threatened by crises. It uses a “twin-track” approach:

- on the one hand taking immediate steps to protect and support agriculture, food and nutrition,
- and on the other addressing in the longer term the underlying factors driving risks, disasters and crises.

For FAO, resilience to shocks is based on four complementary and multisectoral pillars:

1. PREPARE & RESPOND TO CRISIS
2. GOVERN RISKS AND CRISIS
3. APPY PREVENTION AND MITIGATION MEASURES
4. WATCH TO SAFEGUARD

Resilience requires greater coherence and integration of humanitarian, development investment and policy interventions to support local and national institutions and communities, backed up by an efficient global system of well coordinated actors.

Strategic areas of intervention of REOWA

1. For enhanced coordination at the regional level

In order to enhance the efficiency of activities to strengthen food security, FAO’s Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa/Sahel (REOWA) works closely with the regional offices of the United Nations System based in Dakar, non-governmental organizations, Red Cross Movement, FEWS NET, donors and sub-regional organizations.

The Office works closely with partners, such as CILSS, and takes part in the meetings of the PRECEC and the RPCE. These forums bring together the relevant stakeholders involved in food security in the region in order to analyse the food security and nutrition security situation through concerted and coordinated action. FAO supports the implementation and contributes to the AGIR Initiative, which aims to enhance the resilience of the Sahel countries to recurrent food and nutrition crises. This initiative is headed by WAEMU, ECOWAS and CILSS. FAO, in partnership with other UN agencies and NGOs, also collaborates with ECOWAS to strengthen its surge capacity at the onset of humanitarian crises, and participates in the Regional Platform for Disaster Preparedness in West Africa (ECOWAS, Civil Protection, Red Cross and partners).

In terms of coordination and cooperation with United Nations agencies and other technical partners, REOWA represents the Organization and takes part in coordination meetings and joint initiatives in various forums and regional working groups: Humanitarian Coordination IASC, UNDG-WCA, UNOWA, UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, Resilience, Food Security and Nutrition, Nutrition, Cash Transfers CALP, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Task Force, Humanitarian Communication, “Mali focus”, “Guinea +”, etc.

REOWA is fully involved in the preparation of the UN Strategies and Humanitarian Appeals launched in the region, and ensures the integration of the FAO component in these appeals. Moreover, as co-chair of the regional food security sector, FAO ensures the quality and consistency of the analysis and the proposed interventions at both national and regional levels.

On a broader level, REOWA supports initiatives designed to assist governments to implement policies and integrated interventions for food security, nutrition and resilience in the region, such as SUN/REACH, NASAN, AGIR, etc.

2. An in-depth food security analysis to support decision making and better meet needs

The analysis of the immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity, the capacity to forecast hazards and the early warning of decision makers are critical to protect the food security and the livelihoods of vulnerable communities. REOWA is involved in these activities through:

- The publication of analytical and information notes on food security shared with all the sectoral stakeholders;
- Contributing to food security, nutrition and vulnerability surveys;
- Facilitating and coordinating the participation of FAO to the agricultural production, food security and agricultural market joint assessment missions organized by CILSS with national and regional partners (FEWS NET, WFP, etc.);
- Supporting CILSS to improve the development of the tool for the analysis of the vulnerability of the populations to food insecurity used in the Sahel countries (“Cadre Harmonisé”);
- Supporting capacity building of Early Warning Systems (EWS) in West Africa and the Sahel, by facilitating the organization of regional and national training workshops to put in place or improve methodological tools.

1. Famine Early Warning Systems Network
2. Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
3. Regional System on the Prevention and Management of Food Crises
4. Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa
5. United Nations Economic and Monetary Union
6. Economic Community of West African States
7. United Nations Regional Director’s Team for Western and Central Africa
8. United Nations Office for West Africa
10. New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

FEWS NET, WFP, etc.;
3. Promoting Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRR/DRM)

As part of its mandate, REOWA promotes initiatives and activities designed to strengthen the resilience, disaster risk reduction and management capacities of the food security and agricultural sectors in the region.

Within FAO, the Office provides strategic advice and supports the programmatic, technical and operational activities of FAO’s country offices in the region to strengthen the resilience of agro-pastoral systems. On a broader level, the Office is closely involved in defining and monitoring the implementation of FAO’s regional strategies for resilience, notably the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategy for Africa West/Sahel (2011-2013) and its dissemination through FAO’s country offices at national level. In close collaboration with the relevant FAO offices and Divisions, REOWA participated in the elaboration of the 2012 Response Programme to the Sahel crisis and contributes to the Multiannual Resilience Programme for Sahel.

REOWA also shares its expertise in DRR/DRM and resilience with regional partners. Within the framework of the FAO-WFP Joint Roadmap on DRR/DRM, REOWA organizes, along with the relevant FAO Country offices and WFP Regional Office, training sessions on risk management for communities and national partners to enhance their resilience to shocks. Moreover, REOWA ensures that the needs related to livelihoods and food security are integrated within the resilience strategies elaborated with its partners. REOWA actively contributes, through its technical expertise, to the definition of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the AGIR Initiative, in collaboration with the other relevant offices.

4. Implementing projects to protect, restore and improve livelihoods and food security

By the end of 2013, FAO was implementing 67 DRR/DRM and resilience projects in 13 west African countries for a total of USD 90 million. These activities are partially funded on FAO’s own funds but mainly through contributions from donors who are key partners to support vulnerable communities. REOWA regularly informs donors of the needs of vulnerable communities in the region and key intervention areas to support them at regional and country level in order to identify common collaboration areas.

FAO activities to improve the food and nutrition security and the resilience of vulnerable populations in the region include:

- Distribution of seeds, fertilizers and small equipment to farmers, who also benefit from trainings in agricultural techniques, seed multiplication and trade and organizational capacity building;
- Strengthening the resilience of herders through the recapitalization of livestock (distribution of small ruminants), livestock destocking, fodder distribution, and animal health risks management;
- Promoting community and school gardens, coupled with nutrition education sessions and cooking demonstrations using local nutritious foods.

In order to sustainable enhance the resilience of vulnerable households, these activities are coupled with seed system security assessments and the implementation of best practices for the sustainable management of natural resources, especially water (rehabilitation of storage dams, water points, promotion of agricultural practices of Zai type, half-moons, small dikes, anti-salt dikes, etc...), biomass and soil fertility (rehabilitation of grazing areas, promotion of useful trees and organic manure, etc.).

In the West Africa and Sahel region, millions of vulnerable people who depend on the production, marketing and consumption of crops, livestock, fish, forests and other natural resources are confronted by recurring disasters and crises. These shocks undermine their livelihoods and threaten their food and nutrition security.

Drought, floods, the locust threat, socio-political instability or rising food prices exacerbate the structural weaknesses of countries in this region, known for its high poverty rate and population growth.

It is crucial to break the vicious cycle of crises by proactively building the capacities of agricultural and pastoral communities to cope with these shocks. As part of its objectives to increase the resilience of livelihoods from disasters, FAO protects, restores and strengthens the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable populations, in collaboration with national and regional partners.

FAO’s Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa/Sahel (REOWA) was created in Dakar in 2006 to enable FAO to liaise and coordinate with humanitarian actors at regional level. The Office also provides strategic humanitarian guidance for FAO’s country offices in the sub-region.