



Central African Republic and FAO

Improving resilience and promoting sustainable food security and nutrition

FAO has been providing assistance to the Central African Republic since 1961, when the country became a member of the Organization. Given the persistent insecurity and civil unrest, cooperation is mainly based on emergency agricultural operations, building resilience and supporting the livestock and forest sectors. Successful rural development remains a key means of achieving social cohesion and peace-building in the country.



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Established in 1979, the FAO Representation in the Central African Republic is pleased to celebrate its 40th anniversary.

The FAO Representative in the Central African Republic recently launched events to mark the 40th anniversary celebrations. These included: a conference/debate at the University of Bangui, in the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the topic "Agriculture and sustainable peace: reviving the economy, the last kilometer for a lasting peace"; an open day with stands, an exhibition of produce and livestock, photos and documentaries on field interventions; and the awarding of a prize for the best journalist in the rural world, in the presence of the Minister for Defense.

Matching FAO's expertise to Central African Republic's development priorities

FAO's assistance is defined by the 2018-2021 Country Programming Framework (CPF), which focuses on the following four priority areas:

- Contributing to the consolidation of peace and social cohesion
- Supporting communities and households resilience in the face of crises and climate change
- Restoring the authority of the state and its competences and capacity building of other actors
- Supporting the sustainable improvement of agricultural, animal, forest and fisheries value chains

Jointly developed with the Government and other development partners, the CPF reflects relevant priorities in key national development policies

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Caisses de résilience: new hope for rural affected people

Since 2012, the country has been involved in a military-political crisis that has affected almost all of its territory.

"Peace is fundamental to food security, just as food security is fundamental to maintaining peace."

FAO Director-General

The level of violence was of a scale not previously experienced by the already very vulnerable population. As part of its emergency response, FAO promoted a community-based support approach called the "Caisses de résilience" to provide multi-sectoral and integrated

support to communities to help them rebuild their economic activities. Areas supported included cereal crops and livestock, market gardening, poultry farming, small livestock farming, fish farming, processing of agricultural products and seed production.

The approach is based on three components: *technical* - improvement of agricultural skills using a variant of "Farmer Field Schools"; *financial* - support to the endogenous financial system through village associations; and *social* - action to promote social cohesion with group discussions on topics such as conflict management, child rights and gender-based violence.

In May 2015, the "I zingo lawa" women's group from Sékia village located near the capital, was the first to join the programme. Families were able to revive their economic activities thanks to small loans, which have been used to finance small income-generating activities in the areas of family farming, petty trading, small livestock breeding, poultry farming and family fish farming. There was an enthusiastic response from this group and subsequent groups involved in the programme.

Reform of the Chamber of Agriculture

FAO is implementing a project with the purpose of restructuring the Chamber of Agriculture in order to bring it closer to the professional organizations which it represents. The project will eventually establish the Regional Chambers of Agriculture whose mission will be to represent the entire agricultural profession in dealings with the public authorities and other professions in a framework of consultation, promotion and support for projects and the organization of producers. In view of the restructuring of the consular chamber, seven regional chambers will be created and with the support of FAO, the operating bases of a future network of rural consular chambers will be set up. According to the FAO Representative, "equally important is FAO's institutional support to national authorities through the reform and revitalization of the Chamber of Agriculture, an essential tool for succeeding in both the national and international markets."

Training Centre for Conflict-Affected Youth

FAO has implemented a project funded by Italy entitled "Support for the Establishment of a Pilot Centre for Training and Socioeconomic Integration of Conflict-Affected Youth". It has targeted 1 500 people, 70 percent of whom are unemployed young people affected by the crisis and who came from the two main religious communities in the country. In the short term, the direct beneficiaries have been the young people who have participated in the first training cycles from 2017 to 2019.

The project was possible thanks to the FAO Nobel Peace Laureates Alliance for Food Security and Peace launched in May 2016.

According to the FAO Representative, "only the resumption of development in all agricultural sectors will give hope for a better future and thus work constructively towards the stabilization of the country, better social cohesion and long-term peace".

With a total cost of US\$2 million, the project has been implemented by FAO in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Italian Government, the Yunus Foundation, the Karman Foundation and the Holy See. It has supported groups to organize and implement community savings and loan schemes. It will also promote "social enterprise", social cohesion and interreligious dialogue.

