



FAO requires
USD 24.8 million



to assist
994 000 people



2.7 million people
facing acute food insecurity at
crisis or worse levels*



218 368 internally displaced
persons and **221 274** refugees



80% of the population relies on
agriculture for their livelihoods



40% deficit of dry biomass

*Source: Government of Niger – results
of the analysis of the impacts of the
COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition
security, April 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture

- The Niger has been facing multiple recurrent and persistent shocks (e.g. drought, insecurity, massive population displacement, etc.), significantly affecting agricultural and pastoral production, and increasing the levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Following the first reported COVID-19 case in the country (20 March 2020), the Government put in place a series of urgent and essential health-related restrictive measures, the effects of which are still being felt even though the majority have recently been lifted. Disruptions to markets, food chain supply and trade could limit people's access to sufficient and diverse sources of food, especially in areas hard hit by the virus or already affected by high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.
- In rural areas, the challenges linked to disruptions in the food supply chain affect food availability and access. Despite the prospect of a good rainy season, farmers are experiencing difficulties to procure and access agricultural inputs as well as transportation limitations particularly during land preparation for planting. The effects of movement restrictions have also prevented households from engaging in daily wage labour thereby reducing their access to income and increasing the adoption of negative coping mechanisms, such as the consumption of seeds.



- In areas already affected by conflict in the Niger, necessary movement restrictions and border closure linked to COVID-19 are also hampering livestock mobility, thereby affecting agropastoral livelihood activities. In addition, the livestock feed value chain has been disrupted with severe fodder production deficits. As a result, many pastoral households didn't
- have enough feed for their livestock, which in turn has reduced production and trading activities.
- The vulnerability of displaced persons and refugees will increase considerably with the effects of the pandemic, as movement restrictions are likely to hinder their access to humanitarian assistance.



Likely evolution of the impacts of COVID-19 on food security

In an already fragile context marked by acute food insecurity, malnutrition and conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic and related socio-economic impacts is likely to exacerbate the situation in the Niger. Measures put in place to contain the spread of the virus are affecting the functioning of agricultural and livestock markets, food prices, and households' incomes in urban and rural areas. As of June 2020, most of the measures have been lifted and the transportation of goods has been authorized although borders remain closed. However, the effects of the containment measures are still felt. The pandemic hit during a critical period for the preparation of the main agricultural season. Market disruptions and the decrease in incomes are limiting vulnerable households' ability to procure and access the necessary inputs for planting. Border closures still in place will also prevent access to workforce for agricultural production and other relevant activities, as well as the supply of inputs such as seeds, tools and fertilizers.

The lean season in the Niger has started earlier (May instead of June) and will be harsher for pastoralists living in areas affected by fodder deficits – Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéri and Zinder. Border closures may also

hinder the return of transhumant herders following the start of the rainy season in coastal countries, to which they had migrated.

Anticipatory actions and response

As the majority of the population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods, providing agricultural support is crucial to prevent the worsening of the food security situation. Establishing food stocks and restoring fodder production is essential to improve vulnerable people's livelihoods and resilience to shocks. Specific activities focus on providing animal feed, vegetable and fodder seeds, as well as livestock restocking and the implementation of cash-based transfers. Moreover, support to animal health will also be provided through vaccination campaigns and deworming.

While the implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO's) activities has slowed down during the peak of the containment measures, most of the activities have now been resumed. FAO has increased the number of people targeted to reflect the worsening food security situation due to the effects of COVID-19. Measures remain in place to ensure that FAO activities do not put staff, partners and beneficiaries at risk of transmission of the virus.

Within the framework of FAO's Corporate COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, the proposed immediate actions have been identified to meet the urgent short-term needs of the most vulnerable food-insecure populations and protect their assets. It also represents FAO's contribution to the United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19. FAO aims to strengthen the resilience of households suffering

from severe acute food insecurity and malnutrition, who are affected by armed conflict and experiencing a deterioration in their socio-economic living conditions due to COVID-19. The main planned activities in this regard are the following.

- 1) **Strengthen assessments, needs analysis and coordination of the response of the agropastoral sector**
 - analyse the impact of COVID-19 on food security, livelihoods, people's resilience and food value chains;
 - strengthen coordination among Food Security Cluster partners.
- 2) **Implement preventive activities to reduce the spread of COVID-19**
 - disseminate information and awareness messages on prevention.
- 3) **Support agro-sylvo-pastoral production and safeguard the livelihoods of vulnerable households in rural, urban and peri-urban areas**
 - improve availability of quality agricultural inputs;
 - support livestock production.
- 4) **Rehabilitate the income-generating activities of vulnerable groups in order to preserve food value chains**
 - support basic community infrastructure and preserve food supply chains;
 - improve conservation and processing techniques of agricultural products.

Funding



FAO requires
USD 24.8 million

- **USD 8.8 million** under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19
- **USD 16 million** under the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020

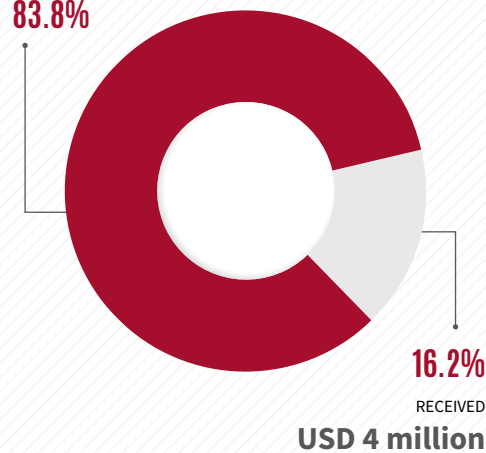


to assist
994 000 people

FUNDING GAP

USD 20.8 million

83.8%



Resource partners

the Governments of Belgium, Italy and France, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and FAO's own resources

Coordination and partnerships

- FAO is closely collaborating with relevant line ministries and supporting the Government in its efforts to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition, as well as on the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable households.
- As co-lead of the Food Security Cluster, together with the World Food Programme, FAO will continue to strengthen coordination among partners, ensuring the supply of quality inputs, minimizing gaps and overlaps in the delivery of assistance, and maximizing synergies and complementarities among the various interventions.

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