



FAO requires USD 22.75 million



to assist 226 225 people



2.1 million people facing acute food insecurity at crisis and worse levels*



450 270 internally displaced persons (IDPs)



64% of the population is engaging in negative coping mechanisms



9 572 confirmed COVID-19 cases (of which 58.2% have recovered) and 275 deaths (13 June 2020) – the highest numbers in sub-Saharan Africa

*Source: Permanent Interstate Committee for drought control in the Sahel (CILSS) Cadre Harmonisé, Cameroon – Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (June–August 2020 projection), March 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture

- Cameroon remains affected by three major crises, namely the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North, Central African refugees in the eastern part of the country, and the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions, in addition to being prone to natural disasters (droughts in the Sahelian areas, floods). Humanitarian access remains difficult in remote areas, depriving a large numbers of people of basic amenities and food aid. Insecurity in the Far North and blockages by armed groups in the North-West and South-West, have led to significant population displacements and forced humanitarian actors to suspend some of their activities, which has worsened the food security situation of the most vulnerable populations. These factors are significantly affecting people’s livelihoods, exacerbating their vulnerabilities and eroding their resilience.
Following the first reported cases of COVID-19 in the country (6 March 2020), the Government put in place urgent and essential containment measures, including movement restrictions, limited transport, closure of land and sea borders (except between the North- and South-West regions and Nigeria), which have significantly affected the availability of and access to the production of food commodities. However, as certain measures have recently been lifted (May 2020), only 17 percent of the population has reported constraints in accessing markets. Overall, the effects of COVID-19 and the related containment efforts are expected to affect the food security and livelihoods of already vulnerable populations in the country.



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- The COVID-19 pandemic has coincided with the harvest of the short cropping season in bimodal agroclimatic areas and with the onset of the main agricultural season in the northern regions, as well as transhumance movements towards the north. While precipitation and vegetation development are expected to be above average across the country, market disruptions and movement restrictions could affect planting. The success of the upcoming cropping season is crucial for the majority of rural populations as well as the functioning of local markets.
- The livestock value chain has been severely affected as well. In northern areas, limited availability of meat has been observed in markets while animal diseases have been spreading, and the transport of animals has been hindered by the restrictions in place.
- Staple food prices have been rising sharply in the last three months; in May, for instance, the price of cassava had reached its highest level since 2012. Price hikes are due to the interruption of food imports, restrictions on the marketing of locally produced foods but also traders who have increased prices of certain foodstuffs compared with the seasonal average. Along with limited labour opportunities, this has eroded households' purchasing power, resulting in the adoption of negative coping mechanisms by the majority of the population.
- While the latest *Cadre Harmonisé* report (March 2020) indicated that 2.1 million people were projected to face acute food insecurity at crisis and worse levels during June–August 2020, a more recent analysis conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development found that nearly 4.9 million people are experiencing acute food insecurity at crisis and worse levels as a result of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic – more than double the previous figure.
- Maintaining and upscaling humanitarian food security interventions for the most vulnerable populations, together with the Health Sector's efforts to reduce the spread of the disease, is crucial. The Food Security Sector analysed the potential impact of COVID-19 in order to ensure continued support to the most vulnerable people and anticipate actions to address the effects of the pandemic.
- The country's most affected regions with people most in need of assistance due to the cumulative effects of multiple shocks and existing weaknesses are the following: Adamawa, East, Littoral, North, North-West, South-West and Far North. These regions all have high numbers of IDPs and refugees due to the various ongoing crises. Displaced populations, especially IDPs, are being supported by host communities, which has become more difficult due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, severely affecting livelihoods with limited access to basic commodities. Targeted households will be selected in urban (particularly in the Centre and Littoral regions) and rural areas affected by containment measures.

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

COVID-19 continues to spread, with all ten of the country's regions affected and no indication as to when the peak of the pandemic might be reached. Although certain measures have recently been lifted (e.g. waiver of curfew of bars and restaurants, re-opening of hotels, schools and sports facilities, and loosening of restriction on public transportation), the Government continues to enforce essential restrictive measures to contain the spread of the virus, namely movement restrictions across internal administrative borders, international border closure and use of masks.

Reported COVID-19 cases in Cameroon are mainly concentrated in urban areas in the Centre and Littoral regions where livelihoods depend on a broader range of sources of income compared with rural areas where agricultural and livestock production remain the main source of livelihoods. While the 2020 main agricultural season in rural areas may not be directly or significantly impacted by the pandemic, with land preparation and

planting successfully having taken place (April–June 2020) despite COVID-19 and related essential health-related restrictions, the effects could still be felt.

Indeed, COVID-19 and related prevention measures could still affect the harvest expected in October–November 2020. For the lean season activities (e.g. vegetable production and animal health), lasting from June to

September, some delays have already been experienced mainly due to lack of funding and procurement process delays linked to border closures where inputs are not available locally. Furthermore, data from FAO and the National Statistics Institute indicate that the inflation rate for the first quarter of 2020 increased at the highest rate since 2013, mainly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related essential mitigation measures implemented by the Government, as well as changes in consumers' actions who focused on stocking food. As the lean season progresses towards its peak in August–September, staple food prices are not likely to show a downward trend until the end of 2020. This will affect accessibility of food, particularly for vulnerable households. The lean season is usually marked by lower food stocks; providing livelihood support is therefore key to ensuring continued access to food and income.

Overall, should COVID-19 restrictions affect markets, harvests, food stocks, coupled with persistent

insecurity in key production areas of the country (North-West and South-West regions for agricultural production, and Far North for livestock production), this could lead to increased food insecurity towards late 2020. The limited funding mobilized up until June 2020 and the reduction in oil revenues for the Government are hindering the capacity to address growing the humanitarian needs. Due to competing demands and the projected downward trend in oil prices, it is unlikely that resources mobilized will meet the growing needs in the next few months.

Of particular concern are the hundreds of thousands of IDPs and refugees residing in the country, in addition to urban and peri-urban vulnerable populations, who have poor access to agropastoral inputs and live in conditions that are more conducive to the spread of COVID-19.

Anticipatory actions and response

Within the framework of FAO's Corporate COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, the proposed 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.

Ensuring availability of and stabilizing access to food for the most food-insecure populations

FAO is working to restore the livelihoods of vulnerable households and boost their means of production, in order to ensure self-reliance and enhance food availability, as well as provide timely, coordinated and complementary assistance to crisis-affected people, by creating synergies between various sectors, particularly regarding nutrition. In 2020, FAO planned to reach 120 500 beneficiaries across three crisis-affected areas (Far North, North-West and South-West/East) through support for agricultural, fish and livestock production, home gardening, farmer field schools (FFS), income-generating activities, cash for work and distribution of small ruminants. However, to ensure adequate response in view of the effects of the pandemic the number of targeted beneficiaries was increased to include additional 105 725 people, for a total of 226 225.

FAO aims to provide beneficiaries with agricultural support to ensure a successful harvest, minimizing post-harvest losses and optimizing production and market linkages to ensure food availability. FFS are taking place and are being used as a platform to disseminate key messages on COVID-19, adapted to standard protocols based on the measures advocated by the World Health Organization and the Government, including the use of masks and hand sanitizer that are distributed at the beginning of each training session, and measures are taken to ensure physical distancing at all times. FAO is targeting 90 050 people affected by containment measures in urban areas of the Centre, Littoral, South and West regions with a range of interventions aimed at improving their agricultural production and income generation (e-business based). FAO will put in place productive safety nets by supporting the production of poultry and eggs, small ruminants and home gardening, as well as the implementation of cash+ interventions. Along with nutrition education, these activities aim to strengthen the availability of and access to food. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development has developed its sector's response plan, which FAO and partners are currently working on operationalizing, pending resources made available.



Funding



FAO requires
USD 22.75 million

- **USD 9.75 million** under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19
- **USD 13 million** under the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020

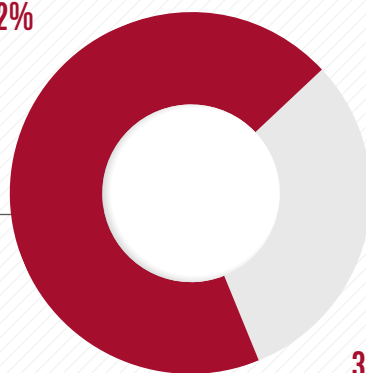


to assist
226 225 people

FUNDING GAP

USD 15.75 million

69.2%



30.8%

RECEIVED

USD 4 million

Resource partners

the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

Coordination and partnerships

As co-lead of the Food Security Cluster, FAO is committed to a coordinated approach with other sectors such as the nutrition, health, early recovery, and water, sanitation and hygiene sectors. FAO's response will complement and enhance synergies with other interventions from the Government and other actors (the World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Organization of Migration, non-governmental organizations, etc.) in common targeted areas to maximize impact. To ensure smooth and coordinated delivery, FAO is working in close partnership with key line ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries, and the Ministry of Economy Planning and Territorial Development.

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