



FAO requires
USD 38.7 million



to assist
831 600 people



5.8 million people* facing acute food insecurity at crisis and worse levels in Adamawa, Borno, Kano and Yobe States**



1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom the majority in Borno State



25 133 positive COVID-19 cases and **573 deaths** (29 June 2020), with Borno State recording the fifth highest number of deaths in the country

*This figure includes Kano State, where 1.4 million people are facing acute food insecurity at crisis level

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

Impact of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture

- Nigeria has been grappling for over a decade with an ongoing insurgency in the northeastern part of the country that has caused mass displacement and has drained both state and community resources. In addition, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the country was emerging from an economic recession caused by lower than anticipated oil prices.
- The March 2020 *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis had projected 3.7 million people to face acute food insecurity at crisis and worse levels in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States during June–August 2020. However, the analysis did not take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security. The latest updated projection (June 2020) indicates that an additional 600 000 people in the three States are facing acute food insecurity, bringing the total to 4.3 million people.
- Urgent and essential COVID-19 restrictions put in place by the Government (i.e. lockdowns in the most affected states, airport and border closures, and inter-state movement restrictions) have negatively affected agricultural activities across the country. Necessary health-related restrictions on interstate travel, market closures, limitations on the movement of workers and other constraints have affected both production and trade. As of early May 2020, the effects of the pandemic on agriculture and food systems in northeastern Nigeria had become evident, specifically in relation to food supply chains and interstate movements of agricultural produce, including both food commodities and animal feed. Vulnerable food system workers including petty traders, small- and medium-scale food processors and other value chain actors remain among those most at risk of financial hardship.
- Food production has also been impacted by the limited availability of agricultural inputs, including improved seed, fertilizer, pesticides and inputs for livestock production, while demand has been affected by the closure of restaurants, factories, schools and other establishments. Intrastate movement restrictions have also led to a decrease in the availability of labour, especially within the agriculture sector that employs many casual workers for the planting season. With a sizeable proportion of the rural population involved in agriculture, disruptions to these livelihoods will likely further exacerbate food insecurity.
- In addition to agricultural inputs, the prices of certain agricultural commodities and food items remain volatile. Since the adoption of COVID-19 mitigation measures, there has been a notable rise in the prices of some food items, including staple foods such as



maize and cassava, throughout much of Nigeria, including the North-East, with implications on household food consumption, food security and nutrition. Reduced demand has caused the prices of some commodities to fall while the prices of a number of others have increased due to diminished supply coupled with the currency depreciation resulting from the impact of COVID-19 on oil markets. Daily wage labourers, in particular, have experienced a deterioration in their food security and nutrition due to stay-at-home orders, and unemployment is expected to increase significantly as the country heads towards a recession. Conflict-affected households are particularly vulnerable to these negative impacts due to already alarming pre-existing conditions, including low levels of food access, high levels of stunting and wasting among children caused by malnutrition, little to no livelihood options and continued displacements. The global COVID-19 pandemic is increasingly affecting humanitarian operations and access in northeastern Nigeria.

- Movement restrictions have had a direct impact on pastoralists engaged in open grazing. Insecurity in the North, especially around Lake Chad, has

pushed herders south in search of sufficient and accessible land, but this new pattern has led to an increase in conflict between farmers and herders. The COVID-19 measures are increasing local conflicts as well as the need for pastoralists to find new solutions. Furthermore, transhumance paths are directly impacted by border closures.

- The impact of COVID-19 will be borne more heavily by already vulnerable communities (IDPs, returnees and host communities), specifically those in fragile conflict-affected areas who already face significant food insecurity and malnutrition. The pandemic may further erode their resilience to socio-economic shocks and may intensify vulnerabilities. Since these communities disproportionately depend on agriculture as their key source of livelihoods, the worst of the COVID-19 related impacts on the sector has the potential to affect them disproportionately. Among these groups, resource-poor women and children remain most at risk. Populations in partly accessible or inaccessible areas and who are cut-off from markets and humanitarian assistance are facing wide food consumption gaps indicative of Emergency (Phase 4 of the *Cadre Harmonisé*).

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

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to continue in the near to medium term, and an increasing number of cases is likely due to both the spread of the virus and increased testing. The effects on food and income sources is anticipated to persist through 2020. In the North-East, this could in particular affect the planting of millet and sorghum, which typically takes place between May and June before being harvested in September. The main anticipated effects of the pandemic are the following:

- **COVID-19 mitigation measures and additional factors to result in below-average harvests.** Many households are expected to face difficulties in engaging in agricultural activities. In the North-East, where seasonal dry weather conditions are still prevailing, below-average incomes and access to agricultural inputs coupled with persistent conflict, flooding and COVID-19-related income losses and market constraints are likely to disrupt the millet and sorghum season. As a result, the extent of agricultural land planted with crops and the main harvests in most areas are likely to be below average.
- **Supply chain to further be disrupted.** Small-scale actors in the food supply chain are facing the

prospect of higher than normal food and income losses due to essential COVID-19 movement restrictions and inconsistent power supply, particularly for perishable items.

- **Livestock sector to be severely impacted as transhumance is limited by health-related movement restrictions.** Transhumance movements between Nigeria and neighbouring countries including Cameroon, Chad and the Niger are likely to continue to be affected by border closures as COVID-19 escalates in the region. Livestock prices will most likely remain above average and peak in July–August.

- **Economic crisis to drive food insecurity in vulnerable areas.** The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global oil prices is likely to continue, with negative implications on government revenues and foreign currency reserves. Any further currency devaluation would reduce the purchasing power of farmers who rely on imported agricultural inputs. Food price hikes are also expected to continue due to increased transaction costs and disruptions to international cross-border trade. At

household level, the loss of income will likely result in the adoption of negative coping mechanisms such as consuming cheaper and less preferred foods, and reducing the portions and frequency of meals. COVID-19 related income losses would therefore disproportionately affect the incomes, food security, nutrition and general resilience of northeastern households due to pre-existing deteriorated socio-economic conditions.

Anticipatory actions and response

Within the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) 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. Based on the initial projections of food-insecure people and combining both pre-existing vulnerabilities and the impact of COVID-19, FAO's response will scale up existing interventions and adapt the response to limit both the spread and impact of the pandemic.

FAO currently leads a project on strengthening the use of data in Nigeria to support decision-making and tracking the Sustainable Development Goals, and will support decision-making and coordination in response to COVID-19. The Organization is also co-leading the socio-economic pillar of the UN response to COVID-19, alongside the United Nations Development Programme. In addition, FAO is offering critical policy advice to enable governments at the federal and state levels to respond to the socio-economic shocks of the pandemic on agriculture and food systems.

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

Both during the pandemic and in its aftermath, agricultural and food system interventions should take into consideration the socio-economic vulnerabilities of smallholder farmers and other food supply chain actors. This should take the form of interventions which aim to boost productivity, market access and livelihood

protection among the affected population, and which are sensitive to protection issues specific to the conflict context. FAO and its partners plan to implement the following activities:

- Support to land preparation including distribution of rainy season and dry season kits (seeds and fertilizer) for crop production as well as essential inputs for backyard vegetable gardening to restore/protect agricultural livelihoods and promote household nutrition.
- Carry out animal restocking targeting women and youth with goat, sheep and poultry packages for income generation and improved nutrition.
- Conduct vaccination campaigns to control animal diseases aimed at protecting livestock-based livelihoods; and provide biosecurity/biocontainment training for disease control, food safety and animal welfare to key associations/groups of animal workers.
- Distribute aquaculture kits (tanks, feed, fingerlings, etc.) to unemployed fishers linked with the provision of fish processing assets (smoking kilns) and training to vulnerable women's groups.
- Establish/upgrade fuel-efficient stove production centres and distribute fuel-efficient stoves to households facing heightened protection and health risks; mitigate poor energy access and adoption of negative coping mechanisms.

2) Ensuring continuity of the food supply chain

FAO will support small-scale producers to reduce post-harvest losses and add value to products in the transformation and marketing phases that have been disrupted by the pandemic. With a longer life cycle, producers and other food supply chain actors will be

more able to choose when to sell and to negotiate better farm gate prices, thereby generating positive effects on incomes and the attendant socio-economic indicators. FAO and its partners plan to implement the following activities:

- Support harvesting and reduce post-harvest losses through dissemination of good agricultural practices.
- Enhance local-level value addition and marketing through support to small-scale food processors.
- Facilitate access to markets (information, transport, logistics, private sector direct linkages) by creating linkages between beneficiaries and local/regional markets and vendors.
- Organize beneficiaries into local agribusiness cooperatives supported with training and seed money towards establishing group savings and loans to promote upscaling and resilience building.
- Increase access to water for farming and domestic consumption.

3) Ensuring food supply chain actors are not at risk of transmission

Awareness raising is critical to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among food system actors, particularly factory workers and those who regularly come into contact with the public. As such, food system workers, through the sustained adoption of good hygiene practices, have a critical role to play in preventing the further spread of the virus in northeastern Nigeria. FAO and its partners plan to implement the following activities:

- Raise awareness at local level to reduce the risk of virus transmission; revise modalities of agricultural extension and protocols for compliance with hygiene/safety measures during planting, harvesting, selling, etc.
- Put in place sanitary and phytosanitary measures in the downstream value chain, i.e. at animal slaughtering, food movement and trade points, etc.
- Carry out dedicated awareness raising in local farmers' markets; risk transmission and community engagement.

Funding



FAO requires
USD 38.7 million

- **USD 22.2 million** under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19
- **USD 16.5 million** under the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020

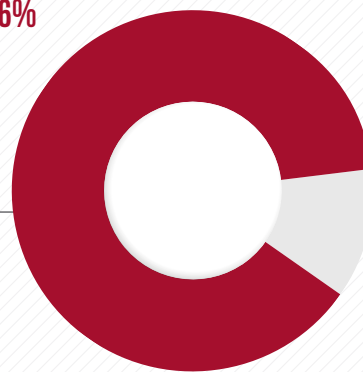


to assist
831 600 people

FUNDING GAP

USD 34.3 million

88.6%



11.4%

RECEIVED

USD 4.4 million

Resource partners

the Governments of Germany and Sweden, and the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

Coordination and partnerships

FAO is collaborating with the Federal Government, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme. FAO is developing a joint inter-agency rapid assessment/analysis to understand better the impacts of COVID-19 on Nigeria's agriculture, food systems, and food and nutrition security situation to inform decision makers during the implementation of response activities. The final report should be published in July 2020.

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