



FAO requires
USD 138.4 million



to assist
2.6 million people



3.5 million people

expected to be facing acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels by September 2020*



2.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom **76%** are living in poverty



Agriculture accounts for **65%** of the country's GDP and livestock up to **40%**

*Source: Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) and Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) Quarterly Brief with a Focus on the 2020 *Jiaal* Impact and *Gu* Season Early Warning (January–September 2020), May 2020



Impact of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture

Somalia faces the triple threat of COVID-19, desert locusts and ongoing severe floods, with the number of people in severe acute insecurity expected to triple by September since the start of 2020. Against a population of 12.3 million, this amounts to one in every four Somalis facing acute food insecurity at crisis levels or worse and in need of humanitarian assistance due to the combined impact of these newly emerging and past shocks.

The COVID-19 pandemic was first reported in Somalia in March 2020, at a time when the country was dealing with two other shocks: the desert locust invasion in mid-2019 and flooding (riverine and flash floods). This builds on a high vulnerability context, with seven in ten Somalis living in poverty, experiencing wide gender disparities and facing multiple recurrent shocks as follows:

- Severe drought in 2016–2017 resulted in the loss of livestock by 40–60 percent among pastoralists in northern and central Somalia, exacerbating rural poverty, which is currently at 72 percent.
- Conflict and insecurity has led to further displacement and disruption of the main agricultural production season, *Gu*, in 2020. Since 2018, millions of people have been displaced, with the majority living in poverty.
- Recurrent flooding since 2018 has resulted in extensive damage and loss as well as widespread displacements. Severe floods during the current main cropping season has affected 918 667 people and close to 50 000 ha of land, over one third of the annual crop production area.
- An upsurge in the desert locust infestation in northern and central regions has led to damage and loss of pasture and crop harvests. Further, there is a high risk that the infestation will expand into southern Somalia by July 2020. According to the latest figures, the pest has infested 247 000 ha of pasture and cropland in Somaliland.
- Overall, the 2020 *Gu* season harvest is already expected to be 20–30 percent lower compared with the long-term average due to the combined impacts of desert locust and other pest infestations, flooding and extended dry spells.

Cases of COVID-19 have continued to rise in Somalia with 2 696 infected as of 18 June 2020. Physical distancing measures have been enforced and health-related restrictions in movement and gatherings are currently in place. Market availability and

income opportunities are reducing as a result, leading to increasing food prices. Further, prices of locally produced maize and sorghum increased by 15-35 percent in several southern markets in April, as seasonal patterns were compounded by trade disruptions due to floods and by panic buying in response to the pandemic. Imported rice prices have also increased by 2-34 percent.

Due to the combined impacts of floods, desert locusts, and COVID-19, a recent analysis conducted by FSNAU and FEWS NET shows that an estimated 2.7 million people across Somalia are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse levels of acute food insecurity, between April and June 2020.

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

Many aspects of life and trade that underpin food security in Somalia are being disrupted, including food imports, remittances and the livestock sector. The overall impact of COVID-19, including containment measures, are expected to be adverse considering that agriculture accounts for 65 percent of Somalia's gross domestic product (GDP), while livestock is the second largest contributor; accounting for up to 40 percent of the GDP and more than 50 percent of the export earnings.

As the situation worsens, Somalia's limitations on the movement of goods and commodities may result in increased food prices and limited ability of traders to restock, thus negatively impacting market dynamics (demand and supply).

- Poor market functionality will result in increased prices and delayed access to inputs for all producers. For example, livestock health and trade flows will be affected as livestock owners will not have access to veterinary inputs and livestock feed at crucial times. Trade flows to feed livestock export markets have slowed due to movement restrictions including across borders (following border closures).
- Farmers will not be able to access optimal labour that will be needed for the main season (July–August) and *Gu* off-season (September–October) harvests, as well as land preparation and weeding for the upcoming Deyr-short rains season (October–December). *Deyr* season production may be reduced due to limitations on access to agricultural inputs.
- An inability to access markets and related logistics during the harvest will lead to massive post-harvest losses including in fisheries due to restricted movements and slowed logistics. Moreover, the functioning of markets during the July–October dry season is critical as households become more dependent on buying food while their stocks dwindle during the lean season.

Somalis are likely to face a 30 to 50 percent decline in remittance inflows, which provide a lifeline and generally increase in times of crisis. Recent reports present a 30-40 percent decline between March and May 2020. An estimated 2 million Somalis live outside of Somalia and send back USD 1.3-2 million per year. This reduction will have a significant impact on urban populations and IDPs in particular, especially female-headed households. On average, IDP households receive about half the remittances of urban households, and IDP households headed by women receive only one-sixth of the remittances of IDP households headed by men.

The livestock sector is likely to be significantly impacted by critical movement restrictions and a decline in trade. Livestock trading may also decline by 30-50 percent during the peak export period (April–August), especially if the *Hajj* pilgrimage in July/early August is cancelled, as it constitutes 75 percent of the exports. These exports provide markets for agro/pastoral households who depend on this rare convergence of the peak markets and rains for herd recovery and household resilience. Moreover, restrictions in critical livestock movements from wet to dry season grazing areas may lead to disease outbreaks, tensions and possible conflict over scarce pasture and water resources.

Anticipatory actions and response

Ongoing interventions in support of vulnerable households include:

- Livelihood support to farmers, livestock keepers and fisherfolk covering cash+ livelihood inputs and capacity strengthening interventions is ongoing, and needs scaling up to reach 1.14 million people. These include support for production during the upcoming *Deyr* season from October–December 2020. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO's) Mobile Money system has disbursed USD 4.8 million to 200 000 people safely since the first confirmed COVID-19 case in mid-March.
- Support to vulnerable agro/pastoral households is ongoing through countrywide vaccination and treatment of 17.5 million animals against priority diseases, as prevention against the loss of livestock assets and production, particularly for poor households. Other prophylactic treatments are also being provided to protect human and animal health. Vaccinations and treatments are critical for trade particularly exports at this time of the year and are expected to reach 2.6 million people.
- Desert locust control operations are ongoing and additional support is required to cover 360 000 ha of land in view of the desert locust upsurge, forecasted to reach its highest levels in the coming months.
- FAO's resilience programming has continued to support communities at risk including those in riverine areas affected by flooding, as well as IDPs through cash+ inputs and training interventions. FSNAU and Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM) continue to provide information on the food security and nutrition situation; these continue to be coordinated with the Government and partners to inform collective actions.

FAO will build on the above interventions as a basis for scaling-up and adjusting programming to the impacts of COVID-19 in the country. Within the framework of FAO's Corporate COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, the following 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 will lessen the impact of COVID-19 on food security and livelihoods in rural areas through (i) cash assistance to address immediate food and non-food needs, and (ii) livelihood assistance to protect and restore people's own food production and incomes. Cash transfers will provide an immediate lifeline, especially in rural areas where floods, desert locusts and/or reduced remittance inflows due to COVID-19 lead to severe income and production loss. In parallel, FAO will assist vulnerable pastoralists and farmers to maintain their livelihoods, sustain household food production and increase local food availability. These will be undertaken as follows:

Priority 1: Meet immediate food needs of vulnerable rural populations (USD 5.6 million)

Cash assistance will improve immediate access to food and other basic needs for 18 352 farming, pastoral, coastal and rural IDP households in severe acute food insecurity. FAO will use its Mobile Money system to disburse monthly unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) for three months, valued at 100 percent of the Minimum Expenditure Basket for food in the target districts.

Priority 2: Support, protect and sustain people's livelihoods (USD 1.8 million)

FAO will provide an integrated cash and livelihood assistance package to 7 220 farming and pastoral households benefitting from the above UCT intervention. During COVID-19, trainings will be delivered through radio programmes aired in the project districts and communicated through SMS to beneficiaries.

In farming areas, FAO aims to assist 2 840 households with agricultural input packages and training. Each family will receive seeds to plant one ha of land with cereals (sorghum/maize) and pulses (cowpea), to be intercropped. Vegetable seeds will also be provided to boost nutrition ahead of the main harvest. Trainings will cover good agricultural, post-harvest and nutrition practices. All agricultural inputs will be provided through FAO's e-voucher system, whereby beneficiaries

redeem quality inputs from an established network of over 300 local traders across Somalia.

In pastoral areas, FAO aims to protect the livestock and related food sources of 4 380 households. Each family will receive livelihood inputs and services to improve

livestock health and production (deworming, mineral blocks and milk storage containers). Beneficiaries will also receive training in milk hygiene, feed use and good nutrition practices.

Funding



FAO requires
USD 138.4 million

- **USD 7.4 million** under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19
- **USD 131 million** under the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020

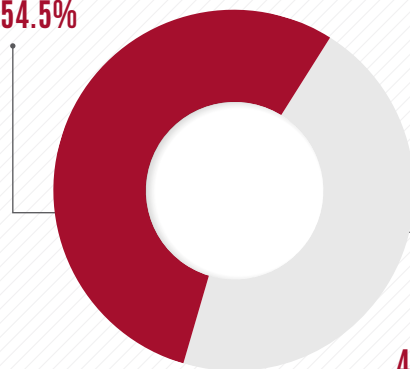


to assist
2.6 million people

FUNDING GAP

USD 75.4 million

54.5%



45.5%

RECEIVED

USD 63 million

Resource partners

the Governments of France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the European Union, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Mastercard Foundation

Coordination and partnerships

- Interventions will be undertaken in close collaboration with the Government and in partnership with other stakeholders.
- FSNAU and SWALIM remain important platforms for monitoring the three-fold crisis and impacts on vulnerable populations, informing programming and continuous adjustments.
- The response will be coordinated with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Food Security Cluster.

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