



FAO requires USD 11.91 million



to assist 864 775 people



850 000 people face acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels*



64.9% of the population lives below the national poverty line (Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2019)



135 058 internally displaced persons (IDPs) mainly due to climatic hazards



84% of the population (1.6 million households) rely on agricultural activities for their food and income



170 confirmed COVID-19 cases and one death (30 June 2020)

*Source: Burundi Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Technical Working Group, Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (May–August 2020), May 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture

Burundi, one of the poorest countries in the world, is characterized by a complex political context, population displacement, epidemics and recurrent natural disasters (109 recorded between October 2018 and June 2019) including torrential rains and strong winds. This has resulted in the total or partial destruction of crops, homes, schools and health centres, and remain the main cause of population displacement. Recurrent shocks are likely to continue to disrupt the livelihoods and resilience of the most vulnerable populations, limiting agricultural production and exacerbating food insecurity. Indeed, the agriculture sector consists of subsistence farming and represents the most important driver of the economy, contributing to 39.8 percent of the country’s GDP, with 80 percent of the production used for consumption.

Following the first cases of COVID-19 reported in Burundi, the Government put in place a series of urgent and essential preventive measures, including quarantine sites, screening tests and the closure of borders, in order to contain the spread of the disease. Although the results of a rapid assessment conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the impacts of COVID-19 on agriculture and food security are expected in late July, negative effects on food accessibility due to increased prices are already observed (maize for example is 37-61 percent above prices from the same time last year). Furthermore, the 14-day quarantine has already led to a slowdown in trade and is disrupting cross-border markets, affecting employment opportunities for casual labour and incomes. Vulnerable households in the Congo Ridge Millet, Eastern Lowlands, East Arid Plateaus and Buragane livelihood zones, strongly reliant on casual labour and trade with neighbouring Democratic



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Republic of the Congo and United Republic of Tanzania, have been particularly affected by border closures during the lean season (April–May). In addition, some produce

intended for export, such as citrus fruit typically exported to Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, have flooded local markets, causing prices to drop.

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

Although confirmed cases of COVID-19 remain low compared with other countries, the effects of the pandemic are likely to add to the impact of recurrent climate hazards on agriculture and food security, potentially hampering agricultural activities for the upcoming seasons (June–November and October–January). More specifically, the main anticipated effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are the following:

- **Supply chain disruptions and declining remittances to further threaten food security.** Significant declines in remittance flows have been reported in Burundi following the outbreak of the pandemic. Reduced remittances, combined with hindered economic migration, disruptions of internal distribution channels and cross-border trade of agricultural produce (especially perishable commodities) are likely to have a negative impact on the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable rural households. Although markets are currently functioning – except for the closure of a market located on the border between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania in the province of Cankuzo – possible future closures or limited market activity would further limit supply of staple foods and basic goods. In the longer term, border closures could result in: (i) a loss of quantities of products intended for export; and (ii) a supply that is disproportionate to the demand causing prices in local markets to drop.
- **Reduced work opportunities to affect the income and purchasing power of casual agricultural workers.** The reduction of the workforce is likely due to illness as well as the effects of more restrictive measures that limit movement and trade. Vulnerable households who depend on casual labour are particularly at risk and agricultural value chains from rural to urban areas would be significantly affected. Households' limited and reduced income opportunities would severely affect their purchasing power for basic goods and agricultural inputs. In urban areas, the spread of the pandemic would affect households in all economic sectors.
- **Humanitarian assistance to continue to be hindered, with significant consequences for people in need.** Delays in procurement combined with increasing prices of goods and services may continue to affect the timeliness of humanitarian assistance. This may have dire consequences for food security, especially among vulnerable returnees and refugees in northeastern and eastern provinces, as well as people affected by natural hazards. The combination of the economic impact of COVID-19 and the effect of floods on agricultural production, is likely to severely erode farmers' livelihoods, further worsening affected farmers' vulnerabilities and hampering agricultural activities in the second half of 2020.

Anticipatory actions and response

FAO's priority in Burundi is to restore the livelihoods of crisis-affected vulnerable households to ensure their self-reliance, reduce risks related to protection and malnutrition, and strengthen their resilience to climate-related crises. In 2020, FAO aimed to support households through the distribution of agricultural inputs, livestock support activities, cash transfers and income-generating activities. The implementation of these activities will now require a revised implementation approach as well as prioritisation of critical/lifesaving activities and additional targeted beneficiaries in order to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on food security and agricultural livelihoods. Within the framework of its response, FAO is raising awareness on prevention measures and best practices among its own staff, partners, beneficiaries and communities, in line with government policies and the World Health Organization (WHO), in line with the "do no harm" principle. The focus will be on ensuring production by providing critical agricultural assistance during planting and harvest periods, nutrition education as well as support to diversify activities to increase resilience to shocks. FAO will target an additional caseload of 500 000 people directly or indirectly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

More specifically, 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.

1) Contributing to setting up a global data and analysis facility

FAO will ensure coordination with its partners and support the Government in order to strengthen the national system for assessing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on food security and markets. The following results will be expected:

- National actions are coordinated for an effective and rapid response.
- Critical information is shared quickly and communication is ensured.
- Monitoring, collection, and regular production of food security and nutrition data will be ensured in order to adequately respond to the needs of vulnerable populations.

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

- Support the purchasing power, livelihoods and nutritional conditions of vulnerable producers.
- Extend the *caisse de résilience* approach to other municipalities that have not yet benefited from it.
- Support income-generating activities benefiting youths and female-headed households.
- Strengthen and support small-scale agriculture, fungiculture and fish farming activities.

3) Ensuring continuity of the food supply chain

- Increase agricultural production to meet domestic demand.
- Support animal health and production.
- Assess and support value chains of agricultural products.
- Support the diversification of fruits and vegetables.
- Develop/strengthen local methods of supplying animal feed and agricultural inputs.
- Improve processing, storage and marketing systems of agricultural products benefiting youth and female-headed households.
- Develop communication tools and products to raise awareness among households on COVID-19 prevention measures in order to curb the spread of the disease in the country.
- Improve preparedness and response capacities at national level.



Funding



FAO requires
USD 11.91 million

- **USD 6.16 million** under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19
- **USD 5.75 million** under the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020

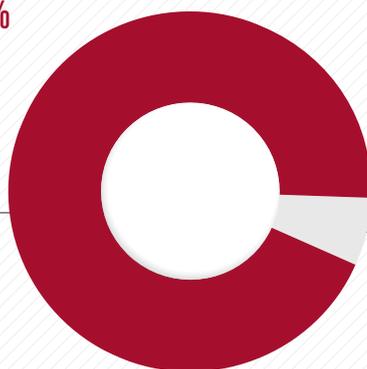


to assist
864 775 people

FUNDING GAP

USD 11.25 million

94%



6%

RECEIVED

USD 655 000

Resource partners

the Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Sweden and the United States of America, the European Union

Coordination and partnerships

The response is being implemented in coordination with the Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, and in close collaboration of other specialized agencies of the United Nations, local non-governmental organizations as well as the beneficiaries themselves. Activities will be implemented with the direct support of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices. Led by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, regular meetings are being held between United Nations agencies and government partners regarding the evolving situation linked to the pandemic as well as mitigations measures for both COVID-19 and the humanitarian context.

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