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Greetings from FAO Representative

Dear Partners,

Once again welcome to another edition of FAO Nigeria e-newsletter.

So much has happened since beginning of 2021. In this issue, you will read about how our support for Rainy Farming Season in northeast part of Nigeria is helping the communities affected by the decade-long insurgency to resettle. We are excited to see the increased ownership of the Cadre Harminse (CH) food security analysis exercise by the Federal Government with the approval of its extension to all the States in the country. This is good step for getting the real picture of the state of food security and nutrition in the country for appropriate actions.

Although the March 2021 CH results show slight improvements in some LGAs in northeast Nigeria, there is a need to take immediate action to address the situation before it worsens.

During this time, Nigeria started the Food Systems Summit dialogues and these are still on-going at sub-national level ahead of the UN's Global Food Systems Summit in September this year. Please read how the country commemorated the 2021 International Day of Forests and my courtesy visits to Ondo and Cross River States with the aim of strengthening partnerships for ensuring improved food security, nutrition and sustainable natural resources management.

Thank you!



Fred Kafeero

FAO Representative in Nigeria
and to ECOWAS



Jouro Umaru from Ubandoma community in Adamawa State joyously admires his harvest. He is one of the farmers who received the FAO's Rainy Farming Season support. When insurgents attacked his community in 2018, he and his fellow villagers fled to safety, abandoning their farms, livestock and food stocks. "The attackers took everything we had," he recounts. Many months later when the villagers returned, they had nothing to fall back on. He is grateful for the support that he has so far received that helps him to rebuild his life. "The seeds we got were lifesavers, they gave us a chance to rebuild our lives faster than we thought," Jouro says. The local varieties of maize, which the farmers were accustomed to, typically produced one cob per stick but the variety distributed by FAO produced better and more cobs per stick. Therefore, with a small portion of land, the farmers were able to cultivate and harvest more.

FAO's 2020 rainy season programme supports conflict-affected farmers in north-east Nigeria to rebuild their livelihoods

KEY FACTS ABOUT FAO'S 2020 RAINY SEASON SUPPORT



A total of 63 300 households (about 378 000 individuals) reached.



111.6 metric tonnes of assorted seeds distributed to the beneficiaries.



150 metric tonnes of fertilizers were distributed to the beneficiaries.



An increase of 40 percent higher in cereal crop yields among beneficiaries

Farmers supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Rainy Farming Season intervention for 2020 season, recorded higher yields as compared to other farmers that were not reached by the programme.

The aim of the Rainy Season intervention is to increase household food production and productivity in communities in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states in northeast Nigeria affected by the decade long armed insurgency.

According to the 2020 crop yield survey, FAO-supported farmers recorded higher yields per hectare compared with their unsupported counterparts. For example, the difference in yield of cereal crops (maize and millet) were up to 40 percent higher among beneficiaries due to a combined effect of use of quality seeds and fertilizers, and provision of extension services.

According to FAO's Head of Office for northeast Nigeria, Al Hassan Cisse, the increase is consistent with beneficiaries' yield growth since 2016 when the programme was started and is attributed to incremental impact of FAO's interventions in the BAY states.

Explaining further, Mr. Cisse of FAO Nigeria northeast Office says that the volatile security environment in the BAY states has limited accessibility to farmland for cultivation.



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Women from Ubandoma, Adamawa State processing some of their harvests for family use and business.

“The availability of high-yielding seed varieties has enabled the returnee farmers to maximize the productivity of the land they can access, significantly boosting food security and income generation,” he points out.

Women beneficiaries who received vegetable kits shared similar experiences. The varieties of vegetable seeds they received were fast-growing, which enabled them to harvest enough to meet household consumption needs and to sell the surplus for extra income.



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Asiya invested earnings from processed okra in the production of the local seasoning, Dadawa



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Permanent Secretary, Dr. Earnest Umakhihe delivering his remarks. Left is the FAO Representative to Nigeria, Fred Kafeero

Government approves *Cadre Harmonise* exercise extension country-wide

The Federal Government of Nigeria has approved the expansion of the food security and nutrition analysis to all states in the country following successes recorded with the Cadre Harmonise (CH) process in some parts of northern Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in the last six years.

The Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Earnest Umakhihe, revealed this on March 19 when officiating the presentation of the 2021 (January—March) CH results of the analysed states in Abuja.

According to him, the Federal Government is satisfied with the process and asserts that the CH results are an important tool for guiding resources allocation and programme intervention.

“Consequently, the management of FMARD has approved the expansion of CH activities to other states of Nigeria so as to achieve a nationwide coverage to facilitate the generation of a general view of food security and nutrition situation in Nigeria,” he pointed out.

He urged stakeholders including development partners to

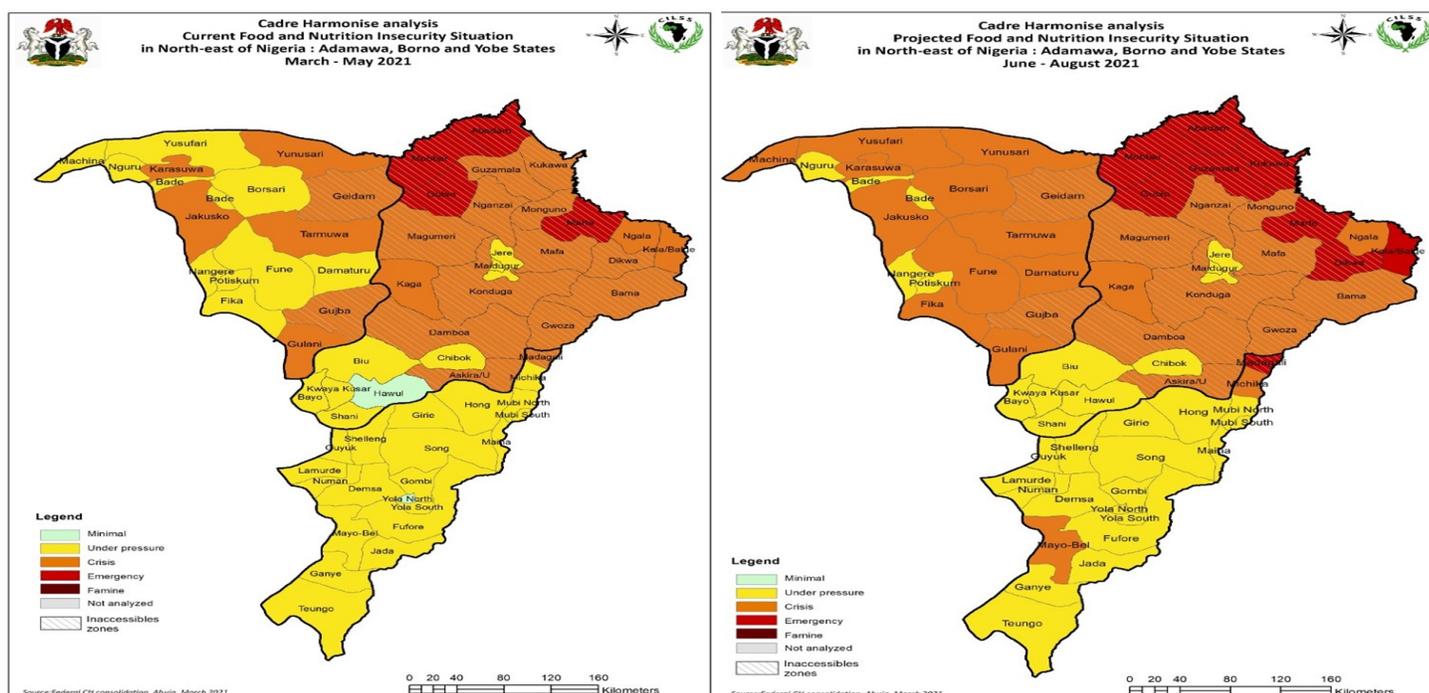
join hands with the Federal Government in the ambitious drive to enhance food security and nutrition in the country.

Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Fred Kafeero, said since 2016 when the process was first introduced in Nigeria, its results have become a major yardstick for identifying vulnerable populations in need of humanitarian assistance. “Food security and nutrition are at the core of FAO’s mandate and we are committed in working with Government and all partners in the provision of livelihood assistance to the vulnerable groups identified through this process,” he concluded.

Cadre Harmonise is led by Government of Nigeria through the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and is facilitated through the National Programme for Food Security.

Its financial and technical support are provided by FAO, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children’s Fund, European Union, the French Development Agency and the United States Agency for International Development. Others include the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxfam, Administration for Children and Families and Save the Children, among others.

Current and projected situation for the BAY states - the most affected



Source: Cadre Harmonise report March 2021

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

Conflict and COVID-19 continue to drive hunger in northeast Nigeria

The ongoing insurgency in the north-east and the COVID-19 pandemic, among other factors, continue to drive hunger in northern Nigeria, particularly in the north-east – according to the latest official preliminary food security numbers released on Friday March 19.

The March 2021 *Cadre Harmonise* results for 16 northern Nigeria states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) show slight improvement in food and nutrition security situation in some states with others sliding from hunger Stress (Phase 2) to hunger crisis (Phase 3) as compared to the October – December 2020 results. Despite the marginal improvement, still over 9 million people in the 16 analysed states and FCT, are expected to be in Crisis or worse phase through May this year making Nigeria especially the northeast region one of the largest humanitarian emergencies in need of assistance in the world. The results further revealed that some areas in Adamawa, Sokoto and Borno states that were under Phase 3 in the October – December 2020 are now under Phase 2

with the number of people under Phase 3 in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) States reducing from 3.4 to 3.2 million. However, the food security and nutrition situation in some parts of Katsina, Kaduna and Niger States deteriorated from Phase 2 to Phase 3 as compared to the October – December 2020 results.

In total, the results which are subject to a national validation exercise for final release, show that a total of 9.196 million people (including 110 000 internally displaced people in Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara) in 14 States among the analysed states and FCT are expected to be in Phase 3 or worse through May 2021. This is down from 9.2 million people that were projected in the October – December 2020 analysis, with a marginal difference of slightly over 100,000 people.

The results also show that more than 12.8 million people (including 130 000 IDPs in Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara) in the 16 states and FCT are expected to be in Phase 3 or worse between June and August this year if immediate emergency food assistance and livelihood interventions are not scaled up and sustained.

9.1m



People in NE Nigeria still face hunger Crisis or worse phases during the March-May 2021 period

12.8m



People including IDPs are expected to be in hunger Crisis level or worse between June and August 2021 if immediate steps are not taken

Global Food System Summit dialogues kick off in Nigeria

The Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with the United Nations system in Nigeria, has started conducting a series of dialogues across the country towards ensuring resilient, inclusive and sustainable food systems in Nigeria by 2030.

This is part of the preparations for the September 2021 global UN Food Systems Summit (FSS) to be convened by the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres.

The first was held on 23 February and it was graced by the Vice President of Nigeria, Professor Yomi Osinbajo who called upon participants to make engaging deliberations and come up with recommendations that will help the country to attain the goal.

The National Convenor of Nigeria Food Systems Summit Dialogue (FSSD), Ms. Olusola Idowu, said that the dialogues are based on five action tracks which aligned with the current development priorities of Nigeria, with the aim of contributing to improved food systems in the country. Ms. Idowu is also the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning.

She named the action tracks as ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all; shifting to sustainable consumption pattern; boosting nature-positive production; advancing equitable livelihoods; and building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

The UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Edward Kallon, observed that the COVID-19 pandemic had worsened the Nigeria food systems and the food systems dialogues would provide a critical opportunity to tackle the weaknesses that were exposed by the crisis.



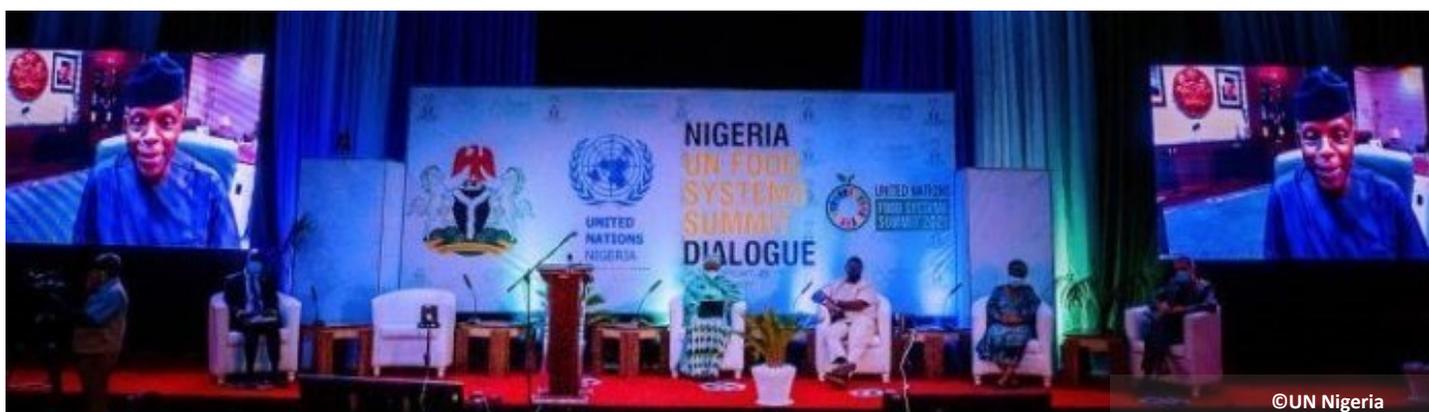
“We must mobilise human and material resources across the country, and come together to dialogue on how to build back better, the ailing food systems.”

He emphasized, “We are all members of the global food system, and we all have a responsibility to act.”

The Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Nigeria, Fred Kafeero, said:

“While we must understand the purpose of current food systems, their functions and our own vision in the next decade. We need to also know the changes that need to be made for food systems to meet the Sustainable Development Goals expectations by 2030 and how stakeholders need to effectively work together or differently for collective action.”

In November 2020, the Deputy Secretary-General and Chair of the Advisory Committee of the Food Systems Summit, Amina J. Mohammed, invited all Member States to engage in the preparation of the Summit through encouraging action-oriented Dialogues, discussing ways to achieve sustainable food systems by 2030.



Vice President of Nigeria, Prof. Yomi Osinbajo, speaking during the inception dialogue in Abuja.



21 March International Day of Forests

Nigeria celebrates Forests Day with a call to stakeholders to support forest conservation, restoration efforts

Nigeria joined the rest of the world to mark the International Day of Forests for 2021 with a week-long events that highlighted the importance of forest conservation and restoration to our well being.

Led by the theme: ‘Forest Restoration: A Path to Recovery and Well-being’, the events were jointly organized by the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, and the United Nations Information Centre.

They provided a platform for all stakeholders to reflect on progress made in the country as far as sustainable management of forest resources was concerned and also promote interaction and affirmation of needed actions.

In his message, the Federal Minister of Environment, Dr. Mohammad Mahmood Abubakar, said that Government was determined to ensure sustainable management in the country specifically referring to the new Forestry Policy as a major development towards that goal.

“The new approved National Forest Policy is based on the guiding principles of sustainable forest management, national development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals,” he said.

Speaking earlier, the FAO Representative in Nigeria, Fred Kafeero, said that this year’s theme Aligns with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, from 2021-2030 whose main targets are to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.

“The UN believes sustainable management of forests is critical to combating climate change and ensure a better future for all. This is why it proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests (IDF) in 2012,” he disclosed.

ACTIVITIES



Weeklong social media campaign by digital influencers on Twitter



Local promotion of the Global Photo Contest



Publication of a newspaper supplement with Federal Environment Minister and FAO Representative articles on key messages



High Level Virtual Panel Discussion



A screen grab of the high level virtual panel discussion



Meeting with Ondo State Governor, HE Rotimi Akeredolu and his technical team in Akure

FAO Representative pays courtesy calls to Cross River and Ondo States

Pledges FAO's support to efforts for food security, sustainable natural resource management

Early in March, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative in Nigeria, Fred Kafeero, visited Cross River and Ondo States with the aim of reiterating his Organization's commitment to ensuring food security and sustainable management of natural resources in the country. He was accompanied by FAO Nigeria's Assistant Representative (Programme), Abubakar Suleiman, Programme Officers, Adeola Akinrinlola and Nifesimi Ogunkua.

There they met with the Governor of Cross River State, HE Prof. Benedict Ayade and the Governor of Ondo State HE Rotimi Akeredolu and their technical teams.

During the meetings, Mr. Kafeero assured continued technical support within the framework of FAO's core mandate for ensuring food security and sustainable management of natural resources.

He reiterated FAO's mandate as a technical agency, with the expertise to strengthen the production capacities of farmers in partnership with governments both at the national and sub-national levels.

HE Governor Akeredolu welcomed the idea, particularly in animal production and its value chains, mainly towards the implementation of the National Livestock Transformation Plan, which is seen an effective tool that will help in ending the farmers-herders clashes in the State. According to him, FAO's support will help mitigate one of the major challenges the State is currently facing.

"We are into animal husbandry and fish farming, because we have the longest coastline in the country. We are also into cash crops, which we have been known for long before now", he noted.

In Cross River State, HE Governor Prof. Ayade, said that his state has embarked into sustainable agriculture value chain development as a major pillar for the State's economy. "Our core value chain focuses on the agricultural transformation of the State and therefore the need to work with the FAO becomes very imperative," he said.

Mr. Kafeero assured him of the FAO's commitment to support the state's efforts to harness its agriculture potentials with the right technical expertise and other supports within its mandate. He gave as an example the project jointly implemented by FAO and the State Government – 'Promoting Integrated Landscape Management and Sustainable Food Systems in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria' as an example. It supports cocoa and oil palm production and their value chain development with the aim of boosting the State's economy.



The meeting at Cross River State Governor's Office