Key points

• Food insecurity in the Niger is linked to armed conflict (especially in the Lake Chad Basin, Liptako Gourma area, northern Tahoua and southern Maradi) triggering forced population displacements, livelihood disruptions, competition over access and use of agricultural land and natural resources, the impact of floods, as well as the effects of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

• Global acute malnutrition has increased from 10.7 percent (2019) to 12.7 percent (2020).

• A joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/Famine Early Warning Systems Network/World Food Programme regional market analysis (March 2021) indicates an alarming increase in the market prices of the main foodstuffs across the region, including in the Niger, with increases of up to 26 percent above the five-year average (and 54 percent higher compared with 2019) for cereals. This trend is expected to intensify during the lean season.

• FAO urgently requires USD 6.1 million by July 2021 to support 52,000 vulnerable households with quality inputs for rainfed crop production and 22,600 households through the provision of livestock feed and cash-based transfers.

Planned activities (August–December 2021)

29,500 targeted households
quality inputs for irrigated crops | market-gardening | rehabilitate agricultural sites and infrastructure impacted by floods | processing and conservation equipment | income-generating activities mainly benefiting women and youth | cash-based transfers | small ruminants (three female and one male goat per household) | provide women with donkeys | vaccinations and deworming | create firebreaks to protect areas of good biomass production against bush fires | recover degraded land | accountability to affected populations | Dimitra clubs | reforestation in internal displacement sites | agricultural and livestock kits to refugees | anticipatory actions

As people in the Niger mainly rely on rainfed agriculture and extensive livestock production for their livelihoods, providing vulnerable households with agricultural assistance is essential to quickly improve their food security.

Ongoing response (May 2021)

44,400 households (310,800 people) being assisted
• Procuring 1,110 tonnes of livestock feed, as well as 557 tonnes of cowpea, millet and sorghum seeds for rainfed crop production to be distributed to vulnerable households.
• Supporting the Early Warning System for the identification of vulnerable areas in the Niger based on the latest Cadre Harmonisé analysis.
Challenges facing food security and agriculture

The Niger faces a complex humanitarian emergency marked by continued insecurity and violence against civilians perpetrated by armed groups, structural poverty and extreme climate events such as floods and drought. The situation is further aggravated by the effects of COVID-19 which caused socio-economic deteriorations and an exponential increase in needs. Armed conflict in neighbouring Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Nigeria also continue to result in instability and large population displacements in border areas, and violence is spilling over into the Niger’s cross-border regions. Spikes of violence particularly in the Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua and Tillabéri regions trigger forced displacements thereby disrupting people’s livelihoods and exacerbating vulnerabilities.

In addition to floods in 2020, rising prices, job losses and limited access to seeds and other agricultural inputs have led to a reduction in cultivated areas thereby affecting households’ production and income. Due to the effects of the COVID-19 restrictions, households faced additional difficulties in marketing their production, particularly linked to high transportation costs, for example.

The latest Cadre Harmonisé analysis (March 2021) indicates that 1.6 million people are facing crisis or worse levels of food insecurity and this figure is expected to increase to over 2.3 million during the lean season (June–August 2021) if appropriate actions aren’t taken.

It is thus crucial to provide agro-sylvo-pastoral production support and rehabilitate income-generating activities to improve households’ food security and protect their livelihoods.