

A photograph of a farmer in a cornfield. The farmer is wearing a red cap and a teal jacket, and is holding a large ear of corn. The field is filled with tall, dry corn stalks. In the background, other farmers can be seen working in the field.

Programme Review

Foreword

Chronic food shortages in Southern Somalia prompted a massive humanitarian response from the international community. FAO figures show that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased from 2.4 million to 3.7 Somalis. FAO has worked tirelessly to support vulnerable families from the devastating effects of famine.



An FAO appeal for USD 70M was launched in July to reverse declining food production and rebuild shattered livelihoods. Protecting assets of herders and farmers in time for the planting system is critical in ensuring the recovery of the most drought affected families.

Breaking the cycle of emergency assistance by strengthening links between emergencies and long term rural development is a key priority for FAO. FAO has supported the distribution of agricultural inputs and animal feed while delivering a cash for work programme to the benefit of 870,000 people.

In this edition, an update on FAO assistance to Somalia is featured highlighting the commitment of the organization in delivering sustainable programme support. Information on the recent FAO sub regional policy consultation on food prices is presented, in addition to an overview one of our flagship regional projects, The Green Wall for the Sahara delivered in partnership with the African Union & the EU.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Helena Semedo'.

Maria Helena Semedo
FAO Assistant Director-General
Regional Representative for Africa

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CMU	Crisis Management Unit
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DFID	Department for International Development
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community for West African States
EU	European Union
FMIN	Fish Market Information Network
IGAs	Income Generation Activities
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
NMTPF	National Medium Term Program Framework
PNFL	Produits Forestiers Non Ligneux
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFPA	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Population Fund
USD	United States Dollar
WFP	World Food Programme

Rebuilding lives in famine hit Somalia



Somali IDPs sheltered at Dobley, near the the Somali-Kenyan border.

“FAO’s response to the crisis in Somalia aims at addressing immediate needs while at the same time strengthening community resilience,”

Sergio Innocente, the Coordinator of FAO’s crisis unit

Three months after the UN declared a state of famine in southern Somalia, famine continues to engulf communities in Bakool, Bay, Lower and Middle Shabelle, and has displaced thousands in Afgooye and Mogadishu, in a crisis projected to last into 2012.

Latest data from the FAO’s Food and Nutrition Analysis Unit indicates that 4 million Somalis, 53 percent of the country’s population, remain in crisis. The country’s worst famine in 20 years has resulted from a rare combination of high food prices, conflict, insecurity, limited humanitarian access and successive harvest failures. The crisis is part of a wider regional drought and conflict-induced crisis in the Horn of Africa that threatens the lives and livelihoods of an estimated 12.4 million people in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

Cereal farmers in Somalia’s southern regions have taken the worst toll of the drought. The failure of two consecutive rainy seasons has contributed to poor annual crop production resulting in increased food and nutrition insecurity.

Moreover, the decline in maize and sorghum stocks subsequently pushed cereal prices to record levels and led to high levels of unemployment. “When all signs were clear that we are entering a deeper crisis in southern Somalia, we immediately launched a \$70-million emergency appeal to bridge our funding gap and established a Crisis Management Unit (CMU) charged with quickly designing an emergency plan with the sole objective of averting the spreading famine,” said Luca Alinovi, FAO’s Officer in Charge for Somalia.

FAO’s humanitarian response is multi-pronged, combining a set of interventions: cash-for-work, livestock and agricultural activities all aimed at restoring the productive capacity amongst the most affected communities.

The emergency response is premised on FAO’s key principle: ‘Build Back Better’ and aims at helping over 1 million Somali farmers and herders to pull through the crisis while at the same time increasing their resilience to future crises.



FAO officials meeting with IDPs sheltered at Dobley, near the the Somali-Kenyan border.



FAO officials meeting with IDPs sheltered at Dobley, near the the Somali-Kenyan border.

Under normal circumstances, Somali farmers produce 40 percent of the local cereal stocks. To restore the farmers' productive capacity, FAO is currently distributing a package of quality farm inputs including improved seeds and fertilizers. This component is targeting 158,333 farming households with each beneficiary receiving inputs for one hectare. The inputs per beneficiary consist of: 20 kg of maize and 50 kg of UREA; in rain-fed area- 15 kg of sorghum seeds and 25 of DAP; alternatively 6kg of Sesame.

By mid October, FAO had provided over US \$3.7million through cash-for-work to Somalia's famine-affected communities. With each beneficiary receiving US \$72 for a month's work. FAO is currently injecting \$ 600,000 per week expected to benefit a total of 246,000 Somalis over a period of two and a half months. Pooled funding has been received from CERF, DFID, Swiss Cooperation, AusAID, ECHO, Spain, USAID-OFDA, USAID-FFP, and the World Bank.

"Our cash-for-work intervention is an innovative aid approach in southern Somalia aimed at immediately increasing the purchasing power of some of the most vulnerable communities. While at the same time rehabilitating infrastructure, which will be used to boost food production and increase market access for farmers " said Sergio Innocente, the Coordinator of FAO's crisis unit.

Through FAO's cash-for-work activities, essential infrastructure is being rehabilitated including: 747 kilometers of canals, increasing irrigated land by 22,000ha; 411 kilometers of feeder roads and 165 water catchments totaling to 425,124 cubic meters storage capacity —enough water for 90 days for at least 472,000 animals.

With over 60 per cent of Somalis being directly engaged in livestock production, the sector is a major source of livelihoods and export earnings. To safeguard the livestock sector, FAO has prioritized the treatment of infectious diseases and parasites, increased disease surveillance as well as carrying out vaccination campaigns aiming to target a total of 14 million animals nationwide. In the first week of October, FAO commenced a major treatment exercise targeting 2.5 million animals in southern Somalia.

Policy consultations on food price volatility held across Africa



Delegates gather for a group photo at the FAO sub regional policy consultation for Southern African, Lilongwe, Malawi

Africa's food price crisis in 2008 was driven by a variety of factors including climate shocks, high dependence on food imports, record fuel prices and low crop productivity. Food costs rose up to 300% in some countries while demand for food staples outstripped supply on the international market.

Yet, the effects of the food crisis were far from universal, while Eastern Africa local grain markets were hit hard by climate shocks leading to sharp price increases, in Southern Africa self sufficiency in maize markets meant lower price levels for consumers.

Government responses to the food price crisis and continuing price volatility was the focus of policy consultations led by FAO. The overall aim of the consultations were to bring high level government officials, national and international

stakeholders and development partners together to share experiences and assess various policy measures in order to develop sound responses for dealing with high food prices. It is hoped that the consultations held will act as a catalyst in continued national dialogue on food price volatility.

Consultations were carried out in line with the Comprehensive Framework for Action, prepared by United Nations High Level Task Force on Global Food Security encouraging a twin track approach to the food price crisis responding to immediate needs of vulnerable population alongside improving long term food security and nutrition and resilience to shocks. In Africa, price consultations were hosted by FAO sub regional offices in Central, Eastern, West and Southern Africa from March to October this year.

Consultations were partnered by leading Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) such as the African Union, COMESA, ECOWAS, SADC and ECCAS.

Consumer protection and price regulation in the face of growing market volatility, trade measures in support of food security and the importance of resource mobilization for agriculture were all raised as important themes for discussion. Some delegates also highlighted the management of strategic grain reserves and the need to conclude CAADP compacts.

Recommendations from policy consultations across the region pointed at the need for common and complementary strategies to support policy measures in addressing price volatility.

In Central Africa where price information systems are undeveloped, FAO gave its support behind the establishment of an ECCAS regional system of information on food security. Harmonization of customs procedures and improved market infrastructure and market information were key areas for further development cited in Eastern Africa alongside the promotion of farmers associations and greater attention to pastoralists and the livestock sector.

Delegates from West Africa continued their support towards ECOWAP (the ECOWAS agriculture strategy), in particular the commitment to increase food production for improved food and nutrition security, next to calls for the promotion of social safety nets. Improved processing of local products through enhanced public private partnerships was also highlighted.

Southern Africa proposed recommendations on greater attention for packaging and post harvest handling, value addition and capacity building for producers and the promotion of alternative and diverse staple foods.

It is expected that FAO policy consultations will establish the basis for a strategic platform on price volatility able to facilitate the engagement of governments, civil society and the private sector in delivering policy solutions to address food market instability in the medium to long term.



A farmer filling bags with maize kernels, Chimoio, Mozambique



A young girl winnowing rice, Moyamba Sierra Leone

Boosting smallholder cassava production in Mozambique



FAO delegates and government representatives on a field day visit with farmers Katandinca, Mozambique

Cassava is vital to Mozambique's economy and to the food security and livelihoods of millions of its people. The crop accounts for more than six percent of the country's GDP, equivalent to some US\$250 million, and provides the main source of calories in the typical diet. Across the country, some 2.5 million farm families produce cassava, which generates employment for hundreds of thousands of others in processing and marketing.

FAO supports the cassava sector by promoting increased production and greater use of cassava processed products by the food industry. Pilot activities in the Zambezi valley of Zambézia Province have directly benefited more than 25 000 cassava growing households and 100 extensionists.

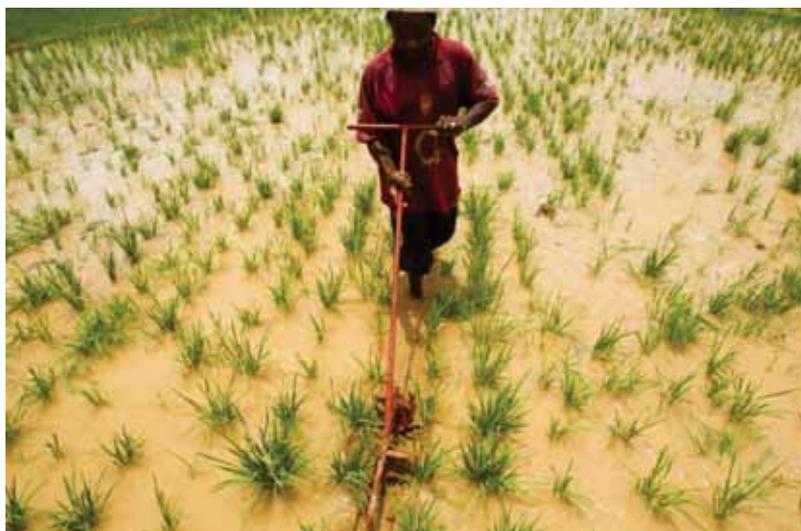
FAO assistance also focuses on strengthening food and nutrition security for the rural and urban poor through development of a sustainable cassava value chain that alleviates the impact of soaring food prices. Cassava value chain development is supported through an integrated business approach, involving both Government and the private sector, that provides technologies to growers and processors, while linking them to markets.

Key project objectives include building a practical shared vision for cassava development, and the implementation of the Government's Cassava Development Strategy, in particular through the promotion of the increased participation of all relevant stakeholders, from production to marketing, in Zambézia Province. The project has provided training for extension workers, farmers, processors and marketers as part of efforts to develop human resource capabilities in support of the cassava value chain.

The Government of Mozambique's high-level commitment to development of the cassava value chain, along with promotion of wheat production, has been demonstrated through the support of the Ministries of Agriculture, Trade and Industry and Science and Technology.

FAO will work to develop, with sustained support from the Government and private sector, an enabling environment that strengthens the role of cassava in both food security and income generation.

West Africa receives Spanish support for regional rice project



A farmer learning to use a rotating hoe for weed control

Loboudou Doue, Senegal

Rice is one of the most widely consumed cereals in sub Saharan Africa(SSA). Although West Africa is located in a prime rice production zone for Sub Saharan Africa, 40-50% of rice consumed is imported. Global rice stocks are at their lowest levels since the early 1980's and African countries can no longer count on Asian rice imports to feed their growing populations. In West Africa in particular, rice consumption has increased annually at a rate of 6%, above the rate of production between the period of 2001-2005.

Following a request from the Governments of Cote D'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, the Spanish government is funding a regional FAO project on enhancing rice production in response to soaring food prices for two years from 2010-2012. Vulnerable groups such as small producers, women farmers and small private enterprises are targeted as key project beneficiaries

More than 25,000 ha will be cultivated for rice production as a result of the project, with around 5,000 ha representing an expansion in land area.

Direct support is planned to 50,000 farmers assisted by five national seeds organizations which will contribute to the production of 5000 to 10000 tonnes of seeds produced in five countries.

Training will also be provided to around 100,000 farmers on improved rice farming practices, post harvest technologies and the commercialization and use of rural radio and multimedia.

The project targets rice production in each of the participating countries covering technical assistance and capacity building towards actors in the rice sector, in particular attention is paid to rice seed production, market distribution and commercialization.

Furthermore FAO will support the development and implementation of national seed policies, capacity building for small business enterprises and local cooperatives with seed production, packaging and storage.

FAO supports the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative



A view of the Great Green Wall Project (Grande Muraille Verte) Thikene Ndiaye Senegal

FAO is supporting the African Union Commission and 13 countries in the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel initiative, together with the Community of Sahelian-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) Secretariat, the Pan African Agency for the Great Green Wall, the EU and key Regional Economic Community Partners such as the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS).

FAO assistance is provided through two complementary projects. The first project launched at the end of 2010 is funded under the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme involving five partner countries: Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali and Niger lasting for 2 years.

The second project is co-funded by the European Union and started in March 2011. It involves eight partner countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Mauritania, Nigeria, The Gambia, Senegal and Sudan.

This project "Support of the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI)" lasting 2 and a half years is developed in the framework of the first action plan (2008-2010) of the Africa-EU strategic partnership as well as the Joint Africa EU strategy Action Plan 2011-2013 adopted in 2010 in Tripoli at cost of EUR 1.75M

The ultimate goals of the GGWSSI projects are the attainment of environmental sustainability and poverty reduction in the circum-Saharan countries. The programme will assume an integrated implementation approach, with particular focus on the rural communities.

Through the implementation of these projects, FAO is working with countries and partners to support the development of a GGWSSI regional harmonized strategy, a monitoring and evaluation system and country



A sign showing donors to the Great Green Wall Project



Participants of the Africa Drylands Week conference visiting the Great Green Wall Project

implementation action plans as well as the development of a project portfolio (at country and trans-boundary levels) and the establishment of a partnership and resource mobilization platform, facilitated by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD.

Support will also be provided towards the establishment of a learning and networking platform for enhancing knowledge sharing, technology transfer, best practices promotion and assessment and monitoring across the GGWSSI countries and partners. The development and implementation of a communication strategy and plan for better engagement of target audiences and stakeholders in supporting the GGWSSI implementation is also highlighted as an important area for FAO support.

Major programme achievements include the formulation of the Great Green Wall national strategies and action plans for Djibouti, Niger and Mali as well as the establishment of a project unit for the EU-funded project and hosted at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa.

FAO organized in collaboration with over 17 partners (including the Millennium Development Goals Center for West and Central Africa, the UNCCD Secretariat, the Earth Institute of Columbia University, the Government of Senegal, the European Union, the Walloon Region – Wallonie Bruxelles International), the First Africa Drylands Week, in Dakar (Senegal) in June this year, under the theme “Towards a global vision and partnership on sustainable land and climate risk management for the Sahara and the Sahel”. This week brought together over 200 scientists, technical specialists, development actors, NGOs, policy makers, and donors to explore the challenges posed by land degradation, desertification, climate change and poverty in the Circum-Sahara region. For further information, see website: www.fao.org/forestry/aridzone and <http://drylandsforum.wordpress.com/>

Building on Africa’s successes locally, nationally and regionally, participants reinforced that efforts to address the current and future challenges must include an Africa-wide alliance, involving initiatives such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI), the CAADP, including MDG-based poverty-reduction strategies aimed at transforming local community livelihoods and environment through best practices such as farmer-managed natural regeneration and agroforestry systems led by local communities.

Missing Food: The Case of Post Harvest Grain Losses in Sub-Saharan Africa'



A farmer carrying a sheaf of rice to be threshed, Betroka region, Madagascar

According to an FAO study 'Missing Food: The Case of Post Harvest Grain Losses in Sub-Saharan Africa' strategic investments in post harvest technologies has emerged as a viable option in support of food security and rural market development.

Food losses contribute to high food prices by removing a crucial part of food supplies from the market, while also having a negative impact on the environment. Food wastage perpetuates a cycle of unsustainable land and water management, in addition to utilization of non-renewable resources such as fertilizer and energy which are used to produce, process and transport food that is not consumed.

The resurgence of Post Harvest Loss (PHL) programmes is attributed to state withdrawal from grain marketing, increased competition from imports resulting from liberalization, and rapid urbanization. This has been compounded by changing consumer preferences driven by an expanding middle class, pushing increasing consumption of wheat and rice over traditional grains.

Previous examples of PHL interventions in Africa are shown to have suffered from financial mismanagement, the misidentification of key constraints leading to a focus on storage while neglecting economic incentives and lack of cultural acceptability e.g. the introduction of grain silos where household stocks were preferred.

FAO study recommendations include direct support to net deficient grain producers in contrast to subsidies for net gain producers in food insecure communities. Since SSA grain producers often face high exclusion from food markets PHL programmes should focus on developing entry points through farm commercialization founded on value chain approaches. Moreover smallholders with few options for investment in post harvest practices and technologies could be supported to improve basic storage hygiene and good storage management.

Finally, opportunities for the better integration of PHL strategies into agricultural research and extension services are cited as offering a way to enhance technical advice and affordable solutions to farmers and private sector players.

Stabilizing rural Burundi



A view of the hills on the way to Rumonge, Burundi

Peace in Burundi can be consolidated by stabilizing the country's rural communities. FAO is calling for continued support to the most vulnerable farmers, while stressing the need to develop agriculture's economic potential.

Ensuring local food production for a growing population will be a major challenge, as almost all the country's arable land is already being farmed. Burundi's demographic pressure is exacerbated by a massive return of refugees, while climatic vagaries, crop pests and rising food prices pose additional threats to food security.

Given the country's persistent vulnerability, it is crucial to continue providing assistance to rural communities. Currently, FAO is carrying out an Action Plan for Burundi valued at around USD 60 million and targeting 1 250 000 people over a period of two years.

Its objective is to increase food production, especially in the most densely-populated areas, for instance by making quality seeds of high-yielding crops available. FAO also supports income-generating activities, such as producing poultry, vegetables or fruit for sale and food processing.

"The aim of our assistance is to support farmers in moving away from subsistence farming to more economically viable forms of agriculture," said Hubert Chauvet, FAO's Representative in Burundi.

FAO's Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division advocates a dual approach to agricultural rehabilitation, aimed at supporting the UN's efforts to bolster Burundi's peace process.

Through its Action plan, FAO is providing much needed hands-on support to Burundi's most vulnerable smallholder farmers.

Joint UN School Canteen Programme in Cape Verde



A woman preparing a meal for her family

Pensamento, Cape Verde

Cape Verde's National School Feeding Programme was established in 1979 and covers all primary schools and public kindergartens nationwide. During the last 30 years, the programme has largely contributed to improved school attendance rates by providing support to the improvement of the food security and nutrition status of students and the implementation of social safety nets for less advantaged families.

Following the completion of the transfer of the responsibility for the School Feeding Programme from WFP (World Food Programme) to the Government in 2010, the United Nations Joint Programme on support to food security and nutrition in schools was designed to provide continuous and sustained support to the Government of Cape Verde on school canteens and nutrition development.

The programme involves the Cape Verde Foundation for Social Action at Schools (FIACSE), the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Health. On the UN side

the programme combines the expertise of FAO, (who acts as the Lead Agency for the Programme), UNICEF, WHO and WFP. This programme is part of the ongoing One UN Programme and is financed for the next 4 years by the Government of Luxemburg for a total value of USD 5.6M .

The general objective of the programme is to improve school performance, quality of education and food nutrition and security of children attending school. The initiative also aims to reinforce the multi-sector approach at the heart of government and UN programme work to improve nutrition at country level.

Key outcomes of the programme are to enhance children's access (boys and girls) to a healthy balanced diet in school, to promote and identify opportunities to integrate local products in school meals and to generate income for local producers (women and men), and to build the knowledge and understanding of primary school students on food studies and the environment through the educational use and exploration of school gardens.

Country Stat in Africa: Disseminating knowledge through statistics



A farmer measuring growth rates of a rice crop while his colleague records the data; Kodith, Senegal

Nationally owned, reliable and timely statistical data and derived indicators on social, economic and natural resources are essential for efficient and effective decision-making and policy monitoring processes in the field of food and agriculture.

The need for statistical information on food and agriculture by producers, traders, policy makers and researchers is especially growing for countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa Region (SSA) in the response to the need for evidence based policy recommendations for rural development strategies.

CountrySTAT for Sub-Saharan Africa is a FAO regional project with the aim to establish an effective programme for the handling of interconnected statistical information and visual indicators on food and agriculture at sub national and national levels in line to support the commitment of the World Food Summit and Millennium Development Goal 1 on the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger.

Today, CountrySTAT is synonym for a project approach as well as for a nationally owned statistical dissemination system. The primary design of the CountrySTAT model

is the establishment of nationally owned and maintained information systems that provide quality statistics on food and agriculture, and promote evidence based technical, political and financial decision making.

CountrySTAT will be established in 17 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia) with the goal to compile, organize and disseminate food and agriculture statistics in these countries.

Establishing partnerships with national statistical offices and other statistical authorities is a key element of the model, in addition to supporting capacity building within statistical institutions. CountrySTAT also promotes the integration of agricultural statistics into national statistical systems and leading international databases.

For further information on CountrySTAT please visit <http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/esscapacity/countrystat/home/en/>

Responding to national programme needs in Congo Brazzaville



Project beneficiaries on their way to market

FAO Congo Brazzaville has established a diverse field programme in response to the various requests from the Government in line with beneficiary needs. Recently FAO Congo has facilitated the formulation of sustainable strategies and the development of a plan of action in relation to livestock, fisheries and aquaculture in Congo.

Emergency Assistance

FAO has supported the implementation of emergency assistance to address Congo's massive influx of refugees following the civil war in DRC.

Emergency CERF funding has supported the implementation of programme assistance to displaced populations, the majority of whom are women and children. Under guidance from FAO support has been provided to 79,865 beneficiaries in the region

of Likouala in the form of agriculture inputs in addition to support to the livestock and fisheries sector.

Support to food security

Project Congo SAN is a major country level intervention on food security and nutrition with the goal to contribute to the improvement of food security and livelihoods for rural populations in line with efforts to support natural resource management. The project has already reached 168, 235 beneficiaries across the country.

The project is operational in three regions nationwide, Likouala and Sangha situated in the North and Pool in the southern part of the country. Key project outcomes include the improvement and diversification of agro pastoral production and income generation for targeted populations.

In particular, attention has been given to small producer organisations who have received support in the area of input distribution and agro processing. Beneficiaries have received equipment for fish and cassava processing.

Technical assistance to the forestry sector

For populations living in forest zones Produits Forestiers Non Ligneux (PNFL) or Non Wood Forest Products constitutes an important source of nutrition and energy as well as being used for medicinal plants. As a result, PNLFs make a substantial contribution to the food security and rural livelihoods of the populations living within the vast forest areas of the Central Africa sub region.

FAO Congo is part of a sub regional project for Central Africa focused on the improvement of food security in relation to the promotion of PNFL in six countries covering Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Key project objectives include improved knowledge and understanding of the role of PNFL in achieving food security and establishing a foundation for the better integration of information systems on forest foods at programme and policy level.

In recognition of the central role of PNFL to the well being of population living in forest area, FAO has given technical assistance to members of the Forestry Commission for Central Africa (COMIFAC) under the regional project 'Strengthening food security through the management and utilisation of Non Wood Forest Products'.



Presentation of cassava processing equipment



Beneficiaries gather in cassava field

Reversing desertification in Senegal



Farmer preparing sandy soil for acacia tree planting, Liguere, Senegal

Fatou Seye, her husband and their six children live in the village of Thiékene Ndiaye in Senegal's drylands. Now 50 years old, Fatou remembers how different the land looked during her own childhood. "When I was young, the land was so much greener with a much greater diversity of plant species," she recalls. Here, as in much of the Sahel - the 5000-kilometre belt of land that divides the Sahara desert from the rest of Africa - vegetation has been disappearing.

With two thirds of the African continent now classified as desert or drylands and desertification affecting a quarter of the world's population, a breakthrough in land conservation has the potential to transform the lives of vulnerable populations.

In an attempt to reverse that process of desertification, FAO has stepped in with the Acacia project. Fatou Seye and her family are among the beneficiaries.

Since 2004, the Acacia project has involved the planting and managing of Acacia forests in arid lands helping combat desertification while providing socio-economic benefits to local communities.

"Before the project we had no trees, we were cultivating degraded, infertile lands, but with the project that has changed," she says.

A total of 44 villages have benefited from the Acacia project in Senegal so far and the project is also in operation in five more countries across the region. The Project has received a total of USD 5.3M in funding from the Italian government.

In the last year, the trees have finally reached maturity and gum extraction has become possible. Harvesting of the gum itself has only just begun as, at 7 years of age, the plants are only just mature enough. In the coming years the plants will provide further income for these women.

Based on its success, FAO is now in search of funding to roll the Acacia project out on a wider scale to re-green more of the land bordering the Sahara desert. If successful, the initiative will keep the desert sands at bay and help provide protection for millions of vulnerable people.

Income generation for vulnerable women in Kigali, Rwanda



A woman preparing cassava
Sake, Rwanda

The Agaseke project was started in Kigali City in 2007, with support and partnership of the Imbutu Foundation and Rwanda Development Board (RDB). Its aim is to create employment opportunities for the vulnerable, unemployed and landless women in Kigali City, by establishing employment opportunities through Agaseke weaving.

Since 2009, eight UN agencies have provided project assistance as part of the One UN programme in Rwanda; FAO, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNIDO, WFP, UNFPA, UNESCO and ILO. The agencies will work jointly in executing the joint intervention building on their comparative advantages and respective fields of work and expertise. The ongoing Agaseke project is expected to last for three years up until 2012.

Project partnerships include the IBANGA Cooperative Union which groups together sixteen primary weaving cooperatives which play a key role in strengthening Agaseke marketing capacity and sales promotion.

Project beneficiaries are 2,000 women from the three districts of Kigali City (Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge). FAO's activities focus on the provision of training for women on Income Generation Activities (IGAs) and weaving cooperation supported by the IBANGA Cooperative Union.

Core project outcomes include mobilization & marketing Systems and procedures for Agaseke products, the establishment of Agaseke training and production centres (T & PC) and the equipment and modification of six existing centres. FAO will provide technical assistance as well as start-up inputs, such as seed, seedlings and saplings.

Additionally the project will focus on enhancing the organizational, management and marketing capacities of IBANGA Cooperative Union in addition to focusing on support to communities in developing small scale food production systems.

FAO supports Arsi communities in Ethiopia



FAO handing over irrigation and storage facilities to the Digelu Tijo Woreda, Ethiopia

Eight districts in the Arsi zone had three good reasons to celebrate in early 2011 as FAO handed over to the communities the Mankula irrigation scheme, nine small-scale milk collection, processing and marketing units, and two Diffused Lights Storage (DLS) facilities. The hand over ceremony was the culmination of the strong partnership between the communities and FAO through the years.

Under the FAO Crop Diversification and Marketing Development Project, the Mankula irrigation scheme was upgraded and now has the potential to irrigate 120 hectares of land (previously, it reached only 50 hectares) at a cost of 5.1 million Birr (equivalent to USD 300,00).

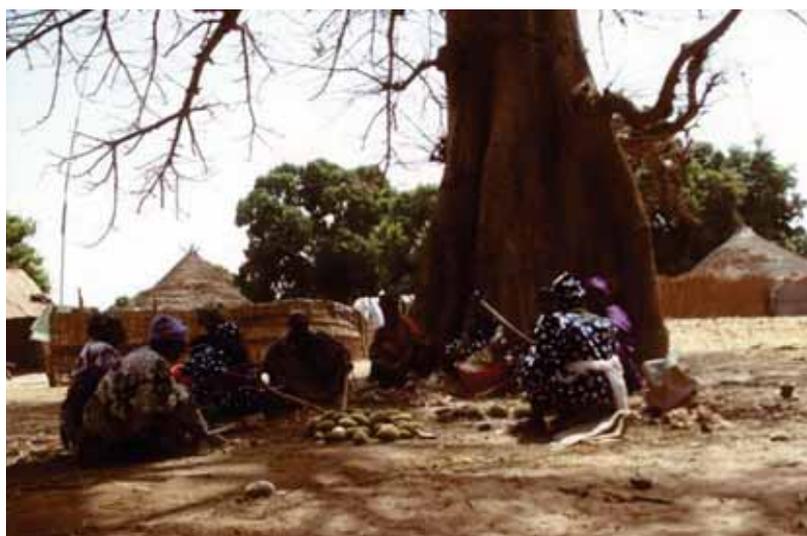
Diverse vegetable crop production, especially potatoes was achieved directly benefiting 240 households. In the PST intervention, one of the model farmers has recorded the highest potato yield (63.5t/ha) in the country in 2010/2011 crop season just after the inauguration of the scheme.

The Mankula traditional irrigation scheme was originally developed by the Arsi zone communities through the diversion of a spring a few years ago. Upgrading of the scheme was initiated by the community and Arsi zone water resource office, and was supported by FAO. The FAO project is looking to upgrade four other irrigation schemes in the zone.

In anticipation of increased production resulting from the upgraded irrigation scheme, the project also supported the construction of DLS facilities in two peasant associations (PAs), namely Mankula and Tite waji, for proper storage of potato seed tubers produced by farmers.

Lastly, FAO inaugurated nine milk collection, processing and marketing units constructed in the five project districts of the Arsi zone. The centers will help improve milk collection and facilitate improved selling arrangements for producers' associations in the area.

Forest policy in Gambia wins award following FAO support



Women opening up fruit harvested from a Baobab tree Basse, Gambia

Gambia's Community Forestry Policy, put in place with support from FAO, has won silver in the 2011 Future Policy Awards as one of the world's most inspiring and innovative forest policies.

Gambia has managed to buck a strong deforestation trend in Africa, with over 350 villages managing 12 percent of the country's forests and a net increase in forest cover of 8.5 percent over the last two decades.

Gambia, with the support of FAO and other development partners, has developed and implemented the first policy and legislation in Africa to provide local populations with secure and permanent forest ownership rights. Transferring forest tenure from state ownership to management by local communities enabled them to reduce illegal logging and forest fires, slow desertification and benefit from using forest products.

"The success of the Gambia's Community Forest Policy proves that even in the world's poorest countries, with the right policies and legal framework in place, rural populations can benefit economically from forests and significantly improve their food security and environment," said FAO's Assistant Director-General for Forestry Eduardo Rojas-Briaies.

Between 2000 and 2004, FAO has facilitated the introduction of economic incentives in the community forestry concept. In 2009 Gambia joined the National Forest Programme Facility hosted by FAO and received help with expanding community forestry areas and enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to derive economic benefits from community forestry. It is intended that by 2016, nearly half of the forests in Gambia will be under community management.

Togo sees significant return on investment in agriculture



A worker stockpiling sacks of seeds
Sotouboua, Togo

Togo's rural population suffered the effects of flooding and sharp increases in food prices that hit the country in 2007 and 2008. These shocks exacerbated already high malnutrition in rural areas, worsened by the collapse of cotton cultivation, a major cash crop.

In 2009, the European Union (EU) channelled €2.5 million through FAO to help over 20,000 of the most-affected Togolese farmers restart their production via the EU Food Facility, the Union's worldwide response to the food price crisis of 2007-2008.

Two years on, the results are clear, says Evariste Douti, Director for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Togo's northern Savannah region, which had been particularly affected. "The people have produced enough for themselves," he says. Some 15,000 farmers have received seeds and fertilizer to grow staple crops such as maize, rice and sorghum, while 5,500 more received inputs for market gardening.

FAO estimates that the total value of what they have produced — 9,634 tonnes of maize, 675 tonnes of rice, 85 tonnes of sorghum, 3,522 tonnes of tomatoes, 350 tonnes of onions and 85 tonnes of green chillis — is €4.7 million, nearly double the amount invested by the EU.

As a result of EU-funding FAO delivered structural support to Togo's agriculture, in particular to its seed sector and market information system.

Furthermore, a market information system covering each of Togo's five provinces as well as the capital was put in place, allowing buyers and sellers to better monitor the prices of agricultural products.

Togo's primary seed farm, which has the potential to produce quality seed for the whole country, was rehabilitated and provided with equipment. Its staff, as well as nearly 300 seed producers, received training in the production and certification of quality seeds.

Enhancing water access to urban and peri-urban agriculture in Luanda



Water collection in Luena, Angola

Image courtesy of WEDC
©Wayne Conradie
(Picturing Africa)

The city of Luanda, Angola is endowed with sufficient water resources, yet farmers face the challenge of restricted water access and poor water quality. Many small scale farmers rely on peri-urban areas and small plots within the city to produce food for their families. Typically farms are based on subsistence production, reliant on rainfall, with no crop rotation.

Considerable available land in the north and south of the city has raised the potential of improving the agriculture and horticulture sector through investments in irrigation. FAO, with funding from the Spanish Government, is working to strengthen urban and peri-urban agriculture through securing access to quality water in and around the city of Luanda, targeting migrants from rural areas who are engaged in subsistence agriculture.

The direct project beneficiaries are small scale growers that have migrated from the urban areas to the outskirts of the city of Luanda.

With access to quality water through disinfection of microbial pathogens, the target beneficiaries will be trained for intensified horticulture production to enhance income generation, reduce poverty and improve food and nutritional security. Increased production capacity of farmers is a core project objective through the expansion of access to quality water for irrigation and training in good agricultural practices. Besides availability of quality food for self consumption, the project also supports income generation by enabling farmers to market their surplus produce.

With the population of Luanda reaching nearly 5 million people, the demand for safe and quality fruit and vegetables is extremely high. Concurrently, the project provides the opportunity to train youth and their parents on urban horticulture technologies, water quality and health, and nutrition education for improving diets.



Water collection in Luena, Angola
Image courtesy of WEDC ©Wayne Conradie
(Picturing Africa)



Water collection in Luena, Angola
Image courtesy of WEDC ©Wayne Conradie
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Infrastructure development will secure water for irrigation from surface water resource in the peri-urban area of Funda near Luanda. Project activities include the rehabilitation of a canal and drainage infrastructure, the installation of a central water pump and the construction of a small reservoir at the Santiago Cooperative at Funda Municipality in the Green Belt peri-urban area of Luanda City covering 1,200 beneficiaries. Overall, these interventions will benefit some 2200 direct beneficiaries reaching 8000 to 12000 family members indirectly.

Furthermore, production and training gardens will be established in a youth centre that will host and train orphans and street children as well as in a senior citizens' centre and their families.

In selected urban areas, family micro-gardens are being developed through the use of existing treated water distribution and through the rehabilitation of water collection systems with reservoirs. Micro garden development is planned in 2 community centres (an elderly center and a youth center) as well in 2 primary schools based on existing water distribution system and a rehabilitated water collection reservoir enabling 1 000 schoolchildren and their families as well as and 400 community growers to benefit from the consumption and sale of high quality vegetables.

The sustainability of the project is promoted through the direct involvement of the farmers' communities and beneficiary groups, training for the application of good agriculture practices, capacity building in the water and crop safety controls and the overall institutional commitment at various levels including the provincial government of Luanda.

Building capacity for the fisheries sector in the Horn of Africa



Fishermen loading nets onto boat
Massawa Eritrea

The fishery sector in the Horn of Africa has increasingly gained in importance in the sub region. The role of the fisheries sector has been highlighted by Ministries of Agriculture and Trade as being crucial for both the national as well as for the household economy. Fish production in the IGAD countries was estimated at 800 000 tonnes in 2007 a substantial increase from 540,000 tonnes in 2000. At present, fish landings are mainly for domestic consumption and trade to regional markets.

There is also a significant export of fish to Europe. Entry to EU markets has been reached through exports in shrimp products from Kenya. In Uganda, most of the exports are fresh or frozen Nile perch fillets also destined for the EU.

Despite some success, fisheries production is characterized by artisanal fishermen reliant on local and cross border trading through informal and unofficial market channels.

FAO is working to support the fisheries sector through the promotion of information and training on fisheries trade through support to the regional integration of trade and marketing of fish and fish products.

The project which was launched in June 2011 and is due for completion in May 2013 aims to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor and fishermen through enhanced access to sector knowledge in the areas of marketing and trade. Core project outputs include supporting regional cooperation and trade status analysis, creating a fish market information network (FMIN and delivering Quality for Regional Export and competitiveness).

Project activities will contribute to meeting MDGs on food production, income generation and employment, and will also provide opportunities for



Fisherman Unloading and weighing of catch
Massawa Eritrea



Fisherman working in shipyard Massawa Eritrea

women to be engaged in fisheries production. FAO is well positioned technically to facilitate the initiation of linkages between the service providers and the key commodity chain actors in collaboration with IGAD and national governments.

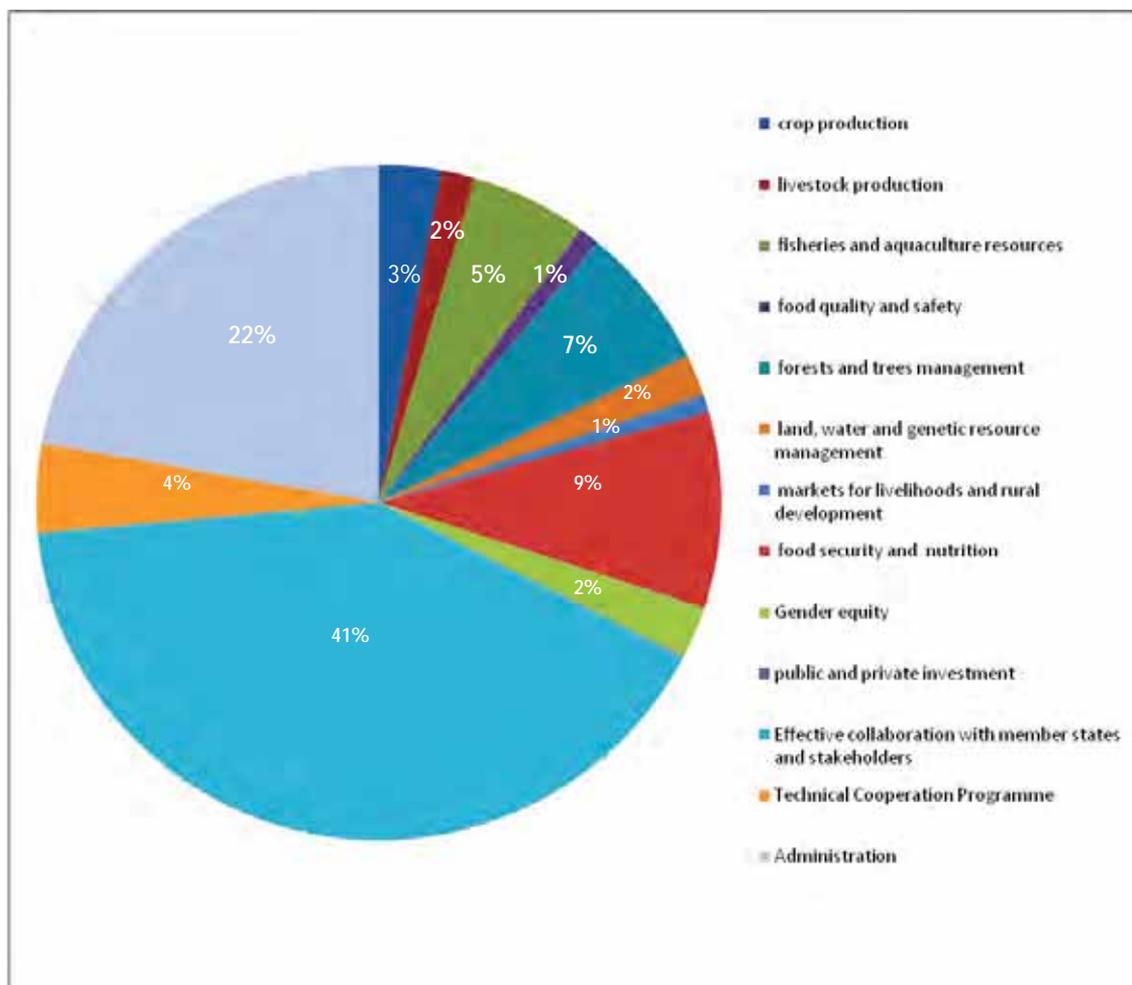
Project beneficiaries are predominantly fish value chain actors and service providers both in the private and public sectors that are actively involved in the facilitation and promotion of fish production and trade in the Horn of Africa. These include the producer and traders associations, and fisheries development departments of national governments. Traders and producers associations are key actors in cementing horizontal value chain networking and can play an important role to provide their members with updated technical information on trade requirements.

Support to capacity building will be provided to allow the government and private sector to play a more effective role in increased quantity and improved quality fish and fish products for the domestic and regional export market.

FAO will provide technical support to improve the production, value addition, marketing and export performance of the fisheries subsector in the Horn of Africa by strengthening regional cooperation, capacity building, creating a fish market information network and by improving quality for export.

This project will fit into the Country Programming Framework (CPF) priorities developed by the concerned countries which also reflects the national policy strategies in fisheries development for all of the IGAD countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan, South Sudan, Somali and Uganda)

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