EXECUTIVE BRIEF
The Sahel crisis
2012

HIGHLIGHTS

- A **new food and nutrition crisis** is affecting millions of people across the Sahel Region of western Africa this year, due to a combination of drought, high grain prices, environmental degradation coupled with chronic poverty and underdevelopment.
- Nearly **16 million people** are at risk of food insecurity (including 5.4 million in the Niger) and more than **1 million children under the age of five** are at risk of severe acute malnutrition.
- **Saheilian cereal production is 25 percent lower than last year**, even though comparable to the average of the past five years. Some countries, such as Chad and Mauritania, are experiencing a decrease in cereal production of nearly 50 percent and other countries are suffering **serious localized cereal deficits and severe fodder shortages**.
- A sharp **decrease in remittances** and the **degradation in the security situation** is likely to exacerbate the situation.
- Early Warning has to trigger early response in order to be effective. We are not at famine, but **only early action will prevent further deterioration of the food security situation and avoid a full-scale food and nutrition crisis**.
- In addition to emergency and rehabilitation activities, medium and longer **term interventions are required to address structural vulnerabilities and reverse the cycle of food shortages and crises in the Sahel**.

**Background:** Food insecurity and malnutrition are recurrent and severe in the Sahel. Acute food crises occurred in 2005 and 2010. In 2012, several countries in the subregion are again at high risk. Agricultural production was sharply reduced due to late and irregular rains, and prolonged dry spells in 2011. Even though comparable to the average of the past five years, cereal production is 25 percent lower than last year. The most seriously affected countries include Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger, Senegal and Gambia, with some countries (Chad and Mauritania) experiencing a decrease in cereal production up to 50 percent as compared to the previous agricultural year, and other countries suffering serious localized cereal deficits. For the households living in affected areas, the lean season is beginning earlier than usual. A severe fodder shortage in localized areas, particularly in Chad, Mauritania and the Niger, is leading to early transhumance and changing transhumance corridors, thus also increasing the risk of tension between communities at border areas and within the countries.

This situation, compounded by sustained high food prices of imported and locally produced products, has placed millions at risk of food insecurity. Nearly **16 million people will be food insecure in the coming months**. This includes 5.4 million people in the Niger (almost 35 percent of the population), 3 million people in Mali (20 percent of the population), around 1.7 million people in Burkina Faso (10 percent of the population), 3.6 million in Chad (28 percent of the population), 713 500 in the Gambia (42 percent of the population), 700 000 people in Mauritania (22 percent of the population) and 850 000 in Senegal (6.5 percent of the population).

A decrease in remittances, due to the global economic crisis and the return of migrants from Libya, is likely to exacerbate the situation. The return of migrants has also increased pressure on communities’ scarce resources and caused tension over access to public services, such as health and education. Growing insecurity, owing to the dissemination of Libyan weapons and spreading terrorism, is jeopardizing development and humanitarian interventions.

Early action is needed to prevent further deterioration of the food security situation and avoid a full-scale food and nutrition crisis.

**ONGOING PROGRAMME**

Within this context, in December 2011 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supported the launch of the Interagency Consolidated Appeals (CAP) 2012 for Chad and the Niger. At the end of 2011/early in 2012, FAO participated in the joint *Comité Inter-Etats pour la Lutte contre la Sécheresse* (CILSS)-FAO-Famine Early Warning System (FEWS NET)-World Food Programme (WFP)-Government assessments carried in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal. Given the lack of a regional CAP, FAO has co-led, together with Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), WFP, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and “*Action contre la Faim*”, the preparation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Strategy for the Sahel “Preparation for a food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel and neighbouring countries”, launched on 15 December 2011 and updated on 6 February 2012.
Within this broader IASC strategic framework, FAO is currently preparing a Regional Response Programme to the Food and Nutrition Security Crisis in the Sahel to define FAO’s interventions in the subregion in response to the crisis, from emergency to recovery, and reinforce efforts to mobilize funds at all levels.

**Ongoing programme**: FAO’s ongoing emergency and rehabilitation projects in the Sahel amount to USD 25.4 million. At least an additional USD 75.4 million are required to support more than 800,000 vulnerable households. While USD 6.6 million has been mobilized, a **funding gap of USD 68.8 million remains**. USD 8.2 million are currently in the pipeline for expected approval during the next months. The donors that have provided assistance in the region include Austria, Belgium, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the European Union and its Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), Finland, France, Luxemburg, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

**Priorities**: Overall priority interventions include:
- protect the livelihoods of vulnerable households by increasing off-season irrigated crop production and sustaining the upcoming main planting season (starting May 2012);
- strengthen the resilience of herders by providing animal feed and veterinary services and, if necessary, supporting destocking; and
- strengthen food security information management and early warning systems, and reinforce disaster risk reduction and management.

**Funding needs**: the table below illustrates the requirements in terms of funding to cover the outlined emergency/rehabilitation priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Funding requirements for 2012 response</th>
<th>Funding received (USD)</th>
<th>Unmet requirements (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BURKINA FASO</td>
<td>Veterinary and livestock breeding inputs, fodder crops, restocking,</td>
<td>14 873 000</td>
<td>800 000</td>
<td>14 073 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>market gardening, grain production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAD</td>
<td>Reduction of malnutrition, emergency assistance (drought), information and</td>
<td>10 357 000</td>
<td>817 000</td>
<td>9 540 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coordination system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAMBIA</td>
<td>Emergency agriculture programme</td>
<td>1 500 000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 500 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALI</td>
<td>Agriculture and nutrition, livestock farming, forestry</td>
<td>10 050 000</td>
<td>1 206 600</td>
<td>9 343 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAURITANIA</td>
<td>Assistance to vulnerable farmers, nutrition, fodder crops, animal feed</td>
<td>9 000 000</td>
<td>900 336</td>
<td>8 100 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIGER</td>
<td>Assistance to vulnerable pastoralist and agricultural households</td>
<td>23 350 000</td>
<td>2 445 296</td>
<td>20 904 704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGIONAL</td>
<td>Support to countries, food security</td>
<td>1 127 500</td>
<td>154 000</td>
<td>973 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAMMES</td>
<td>coordination and analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENEGAL</td>
<td>Emergency agriculture programme</td>
<td>5 100 000</td>
<td>228 000</td>
<td>4 872 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>75 357 500</td>
<td>6 551 622</td>
<td>68 805 878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above emergency and rehabilitation activities, medium and longer term interventions are required to reverse the cycle of food shortages and crises in the Sahel.

In this regard, FAO’s on-going activities include the following: (i) Spanish-funded Water Management and Food Security Initiative for five West African countries, including four in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger, Senegal), for a total of USD 20 million; (ii) Italy-funded Food Security through Commercialization programme, focused on value addition in seven West African countries, with a total budget of USD 21 million, including Mali (USD 4.2 million) and Senegal (USD 3.3 million); and (iii) South-South Cooperation support from China to Mali and Senegal, from Vietnam to Chad, and from Morocco to the Niger.

National Programmes for Food Security (NPFS) have been prepared by all concerned countries, with Mauritania as the most recent to be completed. Two NPFS (Chad and Mali) are under implementation. Within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)/Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) process, FAO is also supporting the
formulation of National Agricultural and Food Security Investment programmes. The NPFS for countries of the Sahel requires an investment of about USD 1.89 billion, of which only 20 percent has been mobilized.

Under the NEPAD/CAADP process, in November 2010 the Niger was awarded USD 33 million of the World Bank Global Agricultural and Food Security Program (GAFSP), to contribute to poverty alleviation by boosting rural crop production and enhancing food security in the vulnerable areas of Maradi, Zinder and Tahoua. GAFSP will build, inter alia, water harnessing infrastructure for small scale irrigation, access roads to production areas, short feeder tracks, spillways, buildings, etc.

Moreover, FAO has supported the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the development of the CAADP Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (PRIA). A thematic programme from PRIA focuses on the reduction of vulnerability to food crises and the promotion of stable and sustainable access to food, estimated at USD 176 million. This programme aims to establish a system of regional emergency humanitarian food reserves. It includes the review and adoption of the Charter for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises, covering West African countries (beyond the Sahel) and actors (beyond states, to include regional organizations and non-state actors). The charter stresses the importance at regional level, to avoid and tackle food crises. FAO also supports ECOWAS, through the IASC Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group (Dakar based), to develop its strategy, mechanism and Plan of Action to intervene in humanitarian crises.

**COUNTRIES OVERVIEW**

**REGIONAL PROGRAMME**

**Ongoing Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme**

Three projects are currently being implemented at the regional level and include an allocation for regional coordination. This will ensure that the response incorporates lessons learned and will facilitate sharing of best practices, food security information analysis and coordination of response intervention. Overall contribution USD 700 000 has been contributed to regional coordination. The programme is supported by the following donors: Belgium, Switzerland and the United States of America.

A team of six people (2 international and 4 national) has been deployed to support the programme implementation.

**Response to the current crisis**

**Priorities:** In response to the current crisis, FAO Subregional Emergency and Rehabilitation Office is seeking USD 1.1 million to:
- strengthen and support food security analysis, coordination, preparedness for and emergency response to food insecurity; and,
- strengthen vulnerable households’ resilience through incorporating lessons learned and best practices on nutrition, DRM and food security analysis drawn from FAO programmes in the region.

**Ongoing response activities:** while no contributions were received so far for regional coordination activities, funds allocated to regional coordination as part of a Swedish contribution to CAP 2011 (USD 100 000) and of a Belgium project intervening in two of the most affected countries (USD 54 000) are being used to support the participation of the Subregional Emergency and Rehabilitation Office in the coordination meetings in response to the crisis, as well as production of related information and advocacy materials.

**Coordination mechanisms:** at the regional level, FAO is actively participating in the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, the Regional Platform for Preparedness to Natural Disasters, the Interagency Standing Committee, the Working Group Emergency Preparedness and Response. For DRM activities, FAO is collaborating closely with ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), CADRI (Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative) and UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction). For activities related to the monitoring of agriculture, markets and food security FAO institutional partners are CILSS, Fewsnet, WFP and the countries’ governments.

**BURKINA FASO**

**Ongoing Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme**

Four projects are currently being implemented for an overall amount of USD 7.6 million. The main focus of emergency and rehabilitation interventions in the country is to improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable population, though provision of inputs (seeds, agricultural tools, livestock and veterinary supplies) and training, promotion of income generating activities (in particular with respect to non wood forestry products) and development of the quality seed sector (the EU Food Facility project, which ended in November 2011, has invested more than USD 25 million to improve the seed sector, supporting farmers with
infrastructures and technical assistance and strengthening governmental institutions for quality control and certification).

The programme is supported by the following donors: Belgium, European Union, Switzerland and the United States of America.

A team of 18 people (3 international and 15 national) has been deployed to support the programme implementation.

Response to the current crisis

Priorities: within the framework of the IASC Strategy for the Sahel “Preparation for a food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel and neighbouring countries”, FAO plans to support 118,000 beneficiaries in Burkina Faso, seeking USD 14.9 million in funding to:

- provide livestock breeding and veterinary inputs to vulnerable herder households in response to the food and nutrition crisis of 2012 in Burkina Faso;
- implement restocking of herds for vulnerable households affected by the food and nutrition crisis;
- support fodder production and rehabilitate good quality fodder reserves for vulnerable households;
- support vegetable production to help vulnerable households affected by the food and nutrition crisis recover; and
- support and rehabilitate the cereal production capacity of vulnerable households for the 2012 agricultural campaign in Burkina Faso.

Ongoing response activities: one project was approved with funding from Belgium (USD 300,000) to support 1,000 vulnerable households with animal feed and veterinary supplies to sustain and improve the health and nutrition status of livestock. In the framework of the ongoing follow up project to the EU Food Facility, some activities of seeds distribution have been redirected to populations affected by the production shortage (USD 500,000).

Coordination mechanisms: FAO actively participates in meetings organized by the Resident Coordinator of the UN system, which brings together UN agencies, technical and financial partners as well as NGOs. The Organization also participates in the small group that supported the preparation of the response plan for the Government crisis (FAO, WFP, the European Union, ECHO, representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock), and in monthly humanitarian coordination meetings.

In collaboration with CILSS, FEWS NET, WFP and the Government of Burkina Faso, FAO participated in crop assessment missions in September and October 2011, and food security and market monitoring missions in January 2012.

CHAD

Ongoing Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme

Seven projects are currently being implemented for an overall amount of USD 9.3 million. Projects aim to strengthen the livelihoods of those most vulnerable to pastoral, nutritional and food crises in eastern and western Chad. Main activities consist in distributing seeds and tools; providing food for work and cash for work programmes, as well as training to improve access to food, in cooperation with WFP and other partners; assisting vulnerable pastoralists and agropastoralists to access supplementary feed for livestock to support and help rebuild their herds; and strengthening coordination systems, early warning and analysis of food and nutrition security.

The programme is supported by the following donors: Belgium, CERF, ECHO, the European Union, the United States and Sweden.

Response to the current crisis

Priorities: Chad launched a CAP document for 2012, including a component on agriculture and livelihoods, which will be implemented in part by FAO.

In response to the forthcoming food and livelihoods crisis resulting from climatic shocks, FAO presents three project profiles that plan to support 149,100 beneficiaries for a total of USD 10.4 million, and aim to:

- reduce malnutrition in the western region of the Chadian Sahel;
- support the Information System and the Coordination Unit for emergency agricultural activities and assessments; and
- provide emergency assistance to populations affected by the drought in Chad.

Ongoing response activities: one project was approved with CERF funding (USD 817,000), aimed at providing emergency supply of animal feed to vulnerable pastoralist and agropastoralist households affected by the drought in the Sahelian zone of Chad.

GAMBIA

Ongoing Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme
There is currently no emergency programme in Gambia. Emergencies interventions aiming at rehabilitating the productive capacities and increasing the resilience of vulnerable households were carried out in 2008, 2009 and 2010 in response to the soaring food prices crisis, crop failures and food losses and floods.

Response to the current crisis

Priorities: In response to the current crisis, FAO is seeking USD 1.5 million to assist 21,000 vulnerable farmers and agropastoralists households with:

- provision of selected seeds and fertilizers for the rainy seasons and for vegetable production in the dry seasons;
- provision of animal feed supplement, vaccines and veterinary supplies to herders;
- strengthening of technical capacities in agricultural production and pest management;
- Capacity development in disaster preparedness and risk management of institutional partner at all levels and communities.

Ongoing response activities
FAO is currently supporting the country in order to complete the agricultural damage and needs assessment and prepare a proposal for submission to the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme.

Coordination mechanisms
In Gambia FAO collaborates with the Ministry of Agriculture and its regional offices, the National Research Institute, Department of Agriculture regional offices, the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), WFP, Farmers Organizations and Territorial Administrations.

MALI

Ongoing Emergency and Rehabilitation Program
For an overall amount of USD 2,845,600, FAO Mali is implementing four projects, three of which responding to the current crisis. Since 2010, emergency and rehabilitation activities have reached 10,890 beneficiaries or 76,230 individuals most of whom are women (70 percent). Key interventions include:

- distribution of agricultural inputs (locally adapted seeds, fertilizers and farming tools) enabling the improvement of small-scale farmers’ production and productivity and re-establishment of household resilience;
- provision of small livestock, animal veterinary supplies (de-worming and vitamins) and animal feed to reinforce agropastoralist livelihoods, provide protein and promote alternative income generating activities;
- Organization of nutrition education sessions for women and men in order to increase the nutritional status of affected households with children and pregnant women facing high malnutrition rates;
- Provision of training on good practices for farming and livestock including vegetable processing and marketing (use of fertilizers, plant protection, harvesting, etc.) and as facilitation of networking and linkages between farmers and agricultural and livestock technical services and,
- development of new rural wells and improvement of existing ones for irrigation and to increase access to clean water for human and livestock populations.

A small team, comprising of six national staff (technical experts and administrative support) and an international consultant, is supporting the implementation of the emergency and rehabilitation programme.

Response to the current crisis

Priorities: FAO Mali is seeking USD 11 million to respond to immediate needs of 70,000 households:

- strengthen the livelihoods of vulnerable populations, by supporting the pastoral and agricultural production capacities of affected households;
- strengthen the capacities of vegetable farmers and small ruminant herders to increase their resilience to climatic shocks;
- improve household access to a highly nutritional and diversified diet, and good nutritional practices; and
- increase beneficiaries’ income through developing the livestock and farm forestry sectors, promoting sustainable management of the ecosystem and reducing greenhouse emissions.

Ongoing response activities: USD 1,206,600 has been received for the immediate response to the 2010-2012 crisis from Belgium (USD 706,000) and from FAO Technical cooperation programme (USD 500,000). Two others projects for the emergency provision of agricultural inputs for vulnerable households to drought affected communities are under consideration by Austria (USD 327,654) and USAID (USD 500,000).
In addition, five projects for an amount of USD 9,327,949 have been submitted for consideration to various donors (European Union, France, Canada) for their possible consideration.

**Coordination mechanisms:** FAO participates in the technical and financial partner meetings on food security, head of agency meetings (UNCT) and meetings organized by the Office for Food Security. In collaboration with CILSS, FEWS NET, WFP and the Government of Mali, FAO participated in crop assessment missions in September and October 2011, as well as food security and market monitoring missions in January 2012.

### MAURITANIA

**Ongoing Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme**

Three projects are currently being implemented for a total amount of USD 1.4 million. The main focus of emergency and rehabilitation interventions in the country is to improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable pastoralist and agropastoralist populations in the southern regions, as well as to reinforce coordination mechanisms and food and nutrition security assessments.

The programme is supported by the following donors: Belgium, Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the United States of America.

A team of 3 people (1 international and 2 national) has been deployed to support the programme implementation.

**Response to the current crisis**

**Priorities:** In response to this crisis, FAO Mauritania is seeking USD 9 million to:

- provide income to severely affected herders and reduce pressure on the ecosystem through destocking;
- improve the nutrition of vulnerable people through gardening activities, deepening wells and ponds, rehabilitating small dams (in collaboration with WFP, within food-for-work schemes) and distributing meat, from destocking;
- improve fodder production by introducing varieties that are adapted to the ecosystem;
- provide animal feed and veterinary inputs; and
- strengthen women’s capacity to address child malnutrition through nutrition education.

**Ongoing response activities:** one project funded by Belgium (USD 300,000) is providing assistance to 8,000 vulnerable households through the distribution of agricultural inputs (seeds and tools), establishment of vegetable gardens and training on the use of nutritious food for improved diets. Another project funded by CERF (USD 600,336) supports 9,500 vulnerable agropastoral households, through destocking, provision of veterinary supplies and inputs for fodder production.

**Coordination mechanisms:** FAO actively participates in the Food Security and Livestock Cluster meetings, and the emergency coordination forum, which brings together UN agencies, NGOs and donors. In collaboration with CILSS, FEWS NET, WFP and the Government of Mauritania, FAO participated in crop assessment missions in September and October 2011, as well as food security and market monitoring missions in January 2012.

### NIGER

**Ongoing Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme**

A total of nine projects are currently being implemented for a total of USD 12,842,643. The emergency and rehabilitation programme in the country focuses on:

- the production and distribution of rainfed improved short-cycle seeds;
- the promotion of gardening during the lean season through vegetable seed distribution, nutritional education, and construction and/or rehabilitation of irrigated areas;
- the distribution of small ruminants and animal feed to vulnerable small herders in disaster affected areas; and
- the protection of cattle against the most recurrent diseases through the distribution of vaccines and deworming products.

The programme is supported by the following donors: Belgium, Sweden, Austria, Finland, USA, CERF. A team of 21 people (7 international and 14 national) has been deployed to support the programme implementation.

**Response to the current crisis**

**Priorities:** The Niger launched a CAP for 2012, including a component on food security, which will be implemented in part by FAO. In response to the forthcoming food and livelihood crisis, FAO presents two project profiles that amount to USD 23.3 million, and aim to:

- rapidly assist the livelihoods of vulnerable pastoralists affected by the pasture deficit in the Niger; and
- provide emergency assistance to agricultural households affected by the 2011 food crisis.
**Ongoing response activities**: The funds mobilized to support the response to the crisis in the Niger amount to USD 2,445,296 and consist of (i) one CERF project (USD 700,000) providing emergency assistance to vulnerable herders affected by the 2011 fodder deficit; (ii) a contribution from Sweden for USD 1,445,296, corresponding to a budgetary increase of an ongoing project to address the current crisis by assisting 82,600 pastoralists with animal feed and vaccines for small ruminants, and (iii) a Belgium funded project, contributing USD 300,000 to support the resiliency of pastoralists affected by fodder deficits through the provision of animal feed. In addition, five projects for an amount USD 12.06 million have been submitted for donors’ consideration (Sweden, France, United States, Belgium, Spain). To date, the unmet requirements amount to a total of USD 20,904,704.

**Coordination mechanisms**

FAO participates in national meetings on the prevention and management of food crises. FAO co-leads the Food Security Cluster with WFP, which is chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture. FAO, in collaboration with CILSS, FEWS NET, WFP and the Government of the Niger participated in crop assessment missions in September and October 2011, and food security and market monitoring missions in January 2012.

**SENEGAL**

**Ongoing Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme**

Two projects are currently being implemented for an overall amount of USD 840,000. The main focus of emergency and rehabilitation interventions in the country is to strengthen national and decentralized capacity to monitor the food security and nutrition status of the populations and to reinforce their capacity to plan and respond to disasters. The programme is supported by the following donors: Sweden and the United States of America.

A team of six people (three international and three national) has been deployed to support the programme implementation.

**Response to the current crisis**

**Priorities**: In response to the crisis, FAO Senegal is seeking USD 5.1 million to:

- strengthen the agricultural production capacity of vulnerable households through the distribution of food crop and vegetable seed; and
- strengthen vulnerable households’ resilience through training on production techniques, awareness of disaster risk management (DRM) and dissemination of agro-meteorological information.

**Ongoing response activities**: While no contributions were received so far for Senegal, funds allocated through the Swedish contribution for the CAP 2011 (USD 228,000) are being used to restore the livelihoods of vulnerable populations affected by the current crisis though provision of agricultural inputs for vegetable production to women associations.

**Coordination mechanisms**: FAO coordinates its crisis response with partners participating in coordination meetings on food safety. In Senegal, FAO participated in the follow-up survey of at-risk areas in collaboration with WFP and the Executive Secretariat of National Food Security, and continues to support the Early Warning System.

**Links**


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