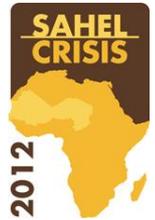




## SITUATION UPDATE

# The Sahel crisis



27 August 2013

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The **Sahel crisis**, with more than 11 million food insecure persons, **has entered its peak with the lean season** when poor households' food stocks are exhausted and people face food shortages and high food prices until the next harvest.
- The food security situation in northern Mali, northern Nigeria and neighbouring countries, where coarse grain prices continue to increase, are of particular concern.
- The agricultural season started with delays due to irregular rains in most of the region. Consequently, the weather and agriculture situation should be watched carefully in the locations where late rainfalls occurred.
- With the USD 19.4 million received so far in 2013, FAO is assisting more than 1.6 million beneficiaries with support to food and livestock production, domestic animal protection and related technical assistance. In order to reach the millions of affected people still in need of assistance **a stronger commitment by resource partners is urgently needed, especially for livestock and agriculture off-season support.**

## FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS EXPOSED TO MULTIPLE CHALLENGES

### *Despite a good 2012 harvest, food insecurity crises situations still remain in localized areas of the Sahel*

Although in 2012 extreme food insecurity was averted and the worst crisis was mitigated, an estimated 11.3 million people, especially those that could not benefit from adequate or sufficient livelihood support in 2012, remain food and nutrition insecure and highly vulnerable to external shocks in 2013. **The nutritional status of children under five remains a concern**, with a continuing high prevalence of acute malnutrition and the upward trend in admissions to nutrition rehabilitation centers close to the 2012 levels, particularly in the Niger, Mali, Chad and Nigeria. This reflects the increased vulnerability of the poorest households who continue to face challenges of food access, limited access to basic services and erosion of their livelihoods. Over 1.4 million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition in 2013.

### *Late rains may jeopardize agricultural yields if rainfall does not continue until the end of September/mid-October*

Some delays in the start of the agricultural campaign were observed in June and early July due to irregular rainfall in most Sahelian countries. It is nonetheless too early to predict the impact of delayed rains on agricultural yields at this stage of the campaign as they depend on the regularity and continuation of rainfall until the end of September/mid-October. Close monitoring of the affected areas is required.

With the ongoing rainy season there is also the risk of heavy rain, which could cause flooding and loss of cultivated areas. In August, floods affected Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. These wet conditions are also favourable for the breeding of pests including locusts, and weeds, and particular efforts are needed to continue pest monitoring in the coming months.

### *Difficult lean period aggravated by population displacements in several regions of the Sahel*

During the lean season, food crops have not yet been harvested and the food reserves of the poorest households are exhausted. This year the lean season came earlier because of the effects the 2012 crisis had on the poorest households (sale of cereals to pay debts, livestock losses and low livestock birth in 2012 leading to a reduced offer). Families are relying on household food stocks when available, but are forced to turn to markets just as prices are highest with the peak of the lean season. This causes a decrease in the purchasing power and additional stress on households' food access. The most vulnerable households have started selling their assets including livestock, though many are getting into debt, which only further decreases their capacity to cope with the crisis.

At the same time, population displacements due to insecurity in some parts of the region (in particular Mali and Nigeria) have been causing further stress on host communities already affected by the recent food and nutrition crises, and have increased competition over access to basic services. Many refugees brought their livestock with them, adding pressure to scarce natural resources (grazing land and water), endangering animals in the region with the possible spread of animal diseases and increasing conflict between pastoralist refugees and host communities.

In Nigeria people are fleeing from insecurity in the northeastern region of the country and resettling in other parts of the country or in neighbouring countries (i.e. the Niger and Cameroon).

### ***Volatile and high food prices are likely to worsen the most vulnerable households' food access in particular in the East Basin***

In the Niger, current food prices exceed the prices prevailing during the peak of the 2012 food crisis. The prices continue to increase throughout the lean season (with a peak in July-August) due to a combination of factors. In particular, since the Niger and western Chad depend on food imports from Nigeria during the lean season, the 2012 floods in Nigeria and insecurity in the northeast have disrupted trade with surrounding countries and affected food availability. In particular, the pastoral households in these two countries saw their income decrease as a result of the lower price of cattle in the Nigerian market. In the short run, only the security situation in Nigeria and the progression of the rainy season of 2013 could have a strong impact on cereal prices. Currently, the situation remains worrisome also in Maradi/the Niger, which is the largest market for millet in the country, supplying almost all of the Niger and a large portion of northern Nigeria.

### ***The food security situation in the region has been rapidly deteriorating as a consequence of the Mali conflict***

It is estimated that there are currently 342 033 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mali and 175 282 refugees in neighbouring countries, primarily Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger (OCHA 5 August 2013). IDPs and refugees are progressively returning to northern Mali, despite the extreme food insecurity situation in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. According to WFP/Government preliminary food security evaluation, 70 to 90 percent of the population living in northern regions of Mali are severely or moderately food insecure, and will continue to be in need of food assistance. Many could resort to negative coping strategies to get by such as consuming or selling off seed stock intended for planting, as well as selling off other assets, such as farming tools and supplies.

The volatile security situation in the region of Mopti, and in the three northern regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu have had severely restricted humanitarian access in the past months. The security situation is improving, however its impacts continues to disrupt the economic systems and affect the livelihoods of the population (limited access to agricultural inputs, loss of cattle, etc.).

### ***Risk of locusts number increase in the northern areas of the Sahel***

Successful control operations in the Sahel during the summer of 2012 reduced the scale of the autumn migration to northwest Africa. Nevertheless, locust populations have increased in Algeria, Libya and Morocco as a result of winter/spring breeding, and given the likelihood of an increase in locust infestations also from summer breeding, national ground surveys should be undertaken in all countries on a regular basis during the next few months to monitor the situation closely. In August, the threat to the main agricultural campaign is limited.

## **FAO RESPONSE STRATEGY**

### ***'Urgent action to support the resilience of vulnerable populations' FAO Strategic Resilience Framework***

FAO is strongly committed to respond to the Sahel crisis under a programmatic resilience framework, anchored in the FAO pillars of Disaster Risk Management (DRM), serving as an overarching umbrella not only for the humanitarian response, but also for the medium-to-long term work of the Organization, including investment. It is entitled "Strategic Response Framework to the Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel" (last update July 2012). **In the short term, FAO's strategy aims to save lives and livelihoods through supporting agriculture and livestock production of vulnerable pastoralists, agro pastoralists and farmers, as well as restoring their productive assets.**

In July 2013, humanitarian partners conducted a mid-term review of both the national Consolidated Appeals (CAPs) and the Sahel regional strategy. FAO, as co-leader of the food security sector, has revised the needs of the agriculture sector, that remain high in a context of persistent food insecurity and the deterioration of poverty levels in some regions of the Sahel.

In 2013, the Organization is appealing for a total of **USD 113.1 million** to support almost **6 million people**.

For the second half of 2013, FAO's proposed priority emergency assistance is focusing on the following activities:

1. **Support to rainfed and floodplain recession agriculture and off-season production**, including the following activities:
  - a. distribution of agricultural inputs (food crop seeds, fertilizers, small agricultural tools, agricultural material to build fences, etc.), targeting the floodplain recession agriculture [August-December]: production of cereals such as rice, maize, sorghum, millet, cowpeas, groundnuts, sweet potatoes) and the off-season agriculture (October-December): vegetable production; introduction of drought resistant vegetable varieties;
  - b. strengthening the food chain and marketing sector (storage, processing and transportation of agricultural goods); and
  - c. integrated food nutrition activities (nutritional education, food preparation and use and consumption diversification).
2. **Support to domestic animal protection and production**, including:
  - a. protection of livestock, provision of veterinary multi-vitamin and mineral food complements and vaccination campaigns;
  - b. technical support for livestock management and animal health; and
  - c. restocking of herds through the distribution of vaccinated small ruminants and poultry.
3. **Soil and water conservation and rehabilitation**, focused on the following activities:
  - a. rehabilitation of irrigation systems and water points;
  - b. rehabilitation or construction of pastoral wells; and
  - c. restoration of degraded lands.

4. **Early warning and preparedness support**, focused on:
  - a. strengthening of national Early Warning Systems;
  - b. support to food insecurity and vulnerability analysis, including technical support to the *Cadre Harmonisé*;
  - c. support to national crop assessments and market analysis; and
  - d. contribution to national and regional contingency plans for the Malian refugees crisis.

## 2013 - A RENEWED COMMITMENT NEEDED

At mid-year, only a few projects related to agriculture livelihood activities have been funded through the 2013 CAP process. Including projects funded outside of the CAP process, less than half of targeted beneficiaries have been reached at the regional level.

The lack of adequate funding to implement emergency agriculture livelihood activities in the Sahel is preventing vulnerable households and communities from strengthening their resilience and capacities to protect their livelihoods. In absence of assistance, the most vulnerable households risk adopting negative coping strategies including eroding their productive assets, reducing their investment in quality inputs, selling their assets and becoming indebted. Increasing support to the agricultural sector could help vulnerable households break the cycle of poverty and hunger, instead of keeping them dependent on food assistance.

**The main agricultural campaign, based on the production of food crops, has not been funded adequately. A stronger commitment of resource partners is needed. The remaining needs of the region are enormous and donors and partners still have the opportunity in the coming months to support households affected by food insecurity by protecting and rebuilding their livelihoods (support to livestock, flood plain recession and dry season agriculture, October 2013 – April 2014).**

**FAO's funds received in 2013**

Countries	Beneficiaries foreseen	Total requirements 2013 (USD millions)	Received funds 2013 (USD millions)	Unmet requirements (USD millions)
Burkina Faso	1 080 600	14.4	5.4	9
Northern Cameroon	50 800	2.4	0	2.4
Chad	715 800	16.4	2.2	14.2
The Gambia	158 000	6.2	0	6.2
Mali	840 000	14.2	3.1	11.1
Mauritania	786 000	4.7	2.2	2.5
Northern Nigeria	40 000	3	0	3
The Niger	1 774 200	45.8	4.2	41.6
Senegal	483 500	4	1.2	2.8
Regional	n/a	2	1.1	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 928 900</b>	<b>113.1</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>93.7</b>

With the contributions received so far, approximately USD 19.4 million (17 percent of the appeal), FAO has been supporting 1.6 million vulnerable farmers, herders and agropastoralists in the Sahel.

The assistance to farmers will allow them to quickly resume production with the distribution of certified food crop seeds and tools for the main agricultural campaign (May–October 2013) in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal. This will enable smallholder producers, many of whom have lost part, or all, of their productive assets (including seeds) during the 2012 crisis, to grow their own food and rebuild their lives and livelihoods as quickly as possible.

FAO's assistance also includes drought-related livestock protection. Herders are provided with small livestock to help rebuild their herds and ensure they can keep producing milk. Livestock, a crucial source of food (especially for children and women) and income, is vaccinated against, and treated, for disease and pests.

Interventions are complemented by capacity building activities such as training on good practices in livestock management, as well as vegetable processing and marketing.

FAO also provides emergency assistance to families affected by population displacements in the Sahel. In Chad, refugees from Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as IDPs and host populations are receiving support for agricultural production in the Tissi area. People affected by conflict in Mali and Mauritania are also benefitting from agricultural and livestock production support (IDPs and host families in the regions of Mopti, Segou, and northern Mali and support to livestock in the Hodh Ech Chargui region of Mauritania).

## Strong FAO expertise in the Sahel

FAO is committed to support vulnerable households in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, the Niger and Senegal through livelihood interventions. In addition, the FAO Sub-regional Emergency and Rehabilitation Office based in Senegal (REOWA), and the FAO Regional Office for Africa based in Ghana, with the support of FAO headquarters, are planning and regionally coordinating the FAO global response to the crisis. This is to be done through short, medium, and long term approaches and interventions, including investment as well as sharing of good practices throughout the subregion. The offices also contribute, together with key partners, to food and nutrition security information analysis.

## Fostering partnerships and coordination mechanisms

FAO is closely partnering with host governments and local authorities at all levels, as well as national and research institutions, other United Nations agencies, the donor community and civil society, local associations and international Non-governmental Organizations.

FAO also participates and often has a prominent, if not lead, coordinating role in national thematic working groups/clusters on food and nutrition security, humanitarian and emergency coordination and early warning. FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) co-lead the Food Security Clusters that are active in Chad, the Niger and Mali, and the food security coordination group in Senegal. In Mauritania, FAO participates in the consultation process on food security with the Government and partners. At the regional level, FAO and WFP co-lead the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group based in Dakar.

In collaboration with the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), WFP and host governments, FAO regularly offers its support and technical expertise to monitoring exercises such as crop assessments, food security and market surveys, vulnerability assessment and targeting evaluations.

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. National Programmes for Food Security (NPFS) have been prepared by all of the Sahel countries, with Mauritania as the most recent to be completed. Two NPFS (Chad and Mali) are under implementation. The NPFS for the Sahel countries require an investment of about USD 1.89 billion.

FAO has supported the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)<sup>1</sup> 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 both 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 Dakar based IASC Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group, to develop its strategy, mechanism and Plan of Action to intervene in humanitarian crises.

## LINKS

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- FAO website on the Sahel crisis: <http://www.fao.org/crisis/sahel/the-sahel-crisis/en/>
- FAO Component of the Sahel 2013 Humanitarian Appeals: [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/emergencies/docs/SahelCAP13.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/SahelCAP13.pdf)
- FAO and emergencies: <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/regions/west-africa/en/>
- FAO Locust Watch website: <http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/2002/index.html>
- DRM Regional strategy for West Africa and Sahel, 2011-2013 (FAO 2011): [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/tc/tce/pdf/DRM\\_Strategy\\_Sahel\\_2011-2013\\_web.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/tc/tce/pdf/DRM_Strategy_Sahel_2011-2013_web.pdf)
- FAO DRR corporate framework: "Resilient livelihoods: Disaster Risk reduction for food and nutrition security": <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2540e/i2540e00.pdf>
- Revised Interagency Sahel Strategy 2013: <http://wca.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/system/files/documents/files/2013%20Sahel%20Strategy.pdf>

## CONTACTS

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### Mr Dominique Burgeon

#### Director Emergency Rehabilitation Division

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla

00153 Roma, Italy

E-mail: [Dominique.Burgeon@fao.org](mailto:Dominique.Burgeon@fao.org)

### Mr José Luis Fernández

#### Senior Regional Emergency Coordinator

FAO's Subregional Emergency and Rehabilitation Office -

West Africa/Sahel

Senegal

E-mail: [JoseLuis.Fernandez@fao.org](mailto:JoseLuis.Fernandez@fao.org)