

“Food insecurity has reached unprecedented levels, affecting well over 40 percent of the population”

Yemen

Background

Yemen has become increasingly unstable due to repeated outbreaks of conflict in the north between the Government and Al Houthi rebels. Following five rounds of fighting since 2004, open hostilities resumed in August 2009, causing tens of thousands to flee Sa'ada and Amran Governorates, expanding the caseload of IDPs to over 150 000 and spreading violence to neighbouring areas once relied on as safe havens. Many have been displaced multiple times and the majority of IDPs are women and children. During years of conflict, inhabitants of conflict zones, displaced persons and host communities alike have exhausted their coping strategies and are becoming increasingly vulnerable.

In the south, separatist demonstrations fuel civil unrest, while the increased arrival of refugees, particularly from Somalia and Ethiopia, is placing additional strain on limited natural resources, social services and employment opportunities. Al Qaeda's presence in remote areas evades government control, further threatening security and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Food insecurity has reached unprecedented levels, affecting well over 40 percent of the population. Heavy reliance on imported food items, including 90 percent of wheat and 100 percent of rice, has made Yemen extremely vulnerable to soaring food costs, which remain above pre-crisis levels and beyond the reach of poor households. At the same time, food production has decreased due to consecutive drought and the October 2008 floods in the east.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

The agriculture sector, inclusive of crop and livestock production, provides the livelihood and an important source of nourishment for over 70 percent of Yemenis. Repeated eruptions of conflict in the north have forced IDPs to abandon their fields. Following severe drought and crop losses in 2008, irregular summer rains in 2009 delayed the sowing season by one-and-a-half months. Farmers, if they at all chose to invest in seeds this late in the season, often reported total crop failure.

Despite a fighting effort to keep livestock alive, pastoralists have lost or are at increasing risk of losing their animals. Numerous families escaping conflict zones fled for safety together with livestock – most often their only remaining livelihood asset and safety net. In drought-affected areas, conflict zones, IDP camps and host communities, livestock owners lack



FAO plans to ensure that seeds and fertilizers reach small- and medium-scale farmers in time for the upcoming planting seasons.

access to the natural pastures, supplementary feed, surface water and veterinary services necessary to maintain their flocks. Poor sanitary conditions have also heightened the risk of animal disease outbreaks. These factors have triggered high livestock mortality and the distress sale of productive, life-sustaining assets.

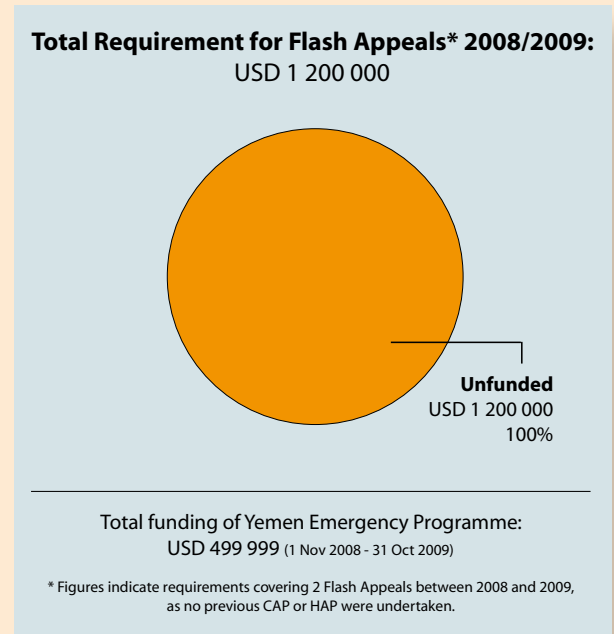
Over time, this situation can only deteriorate unless emergency agricultural assistance reaches affected families rapidly. The populations at stake constitute Yemen's most vulnerable social strata and are dependent on humanitarian focus and action for survival.

FAO response

In 2010, FAO aims to provide time-critical agricultural inputs to families worst affected by recent shocks. Specifically, the proposed projects seek to ensure that appropriate seeds and fertilizers reach small- and medium-scale farmers in time for the upcoming planting seasons and that vulnerable livestock owners have access to livestock feed and veterinary treatment to safeguard the survival, health and productivity of their herds.

With donor support, FAO will distribute improved and drought-tolerant wheat, sorghum and millet seeds and fertilizers to farming families who suffered total crop losses due to drought, irregular rainfall and depleted water resources. Training in improved soil and water management practices will enable the more effective use of limited rainfall and thereby improve yields in the short and longer term.

To protect the remaining assets of Yemen's most destitute livestock owners affected by conflict and recurrent drought, FAO seeks to provide families with sufficient quantities of feed to cover the daily requirements of up to ten animals per household for three months, during the most critical phase of the animal feeding calendar. Further, half a million animals in Sa'ada and surrounding governorates will be vaccinated against prevalent TADs and local veterinary staff will be trained in disease surveillance and treatment operations.



PROPOSALS: FAO EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

Total funding requested: USD 11 847 000

Emergency support to small- and medium-scale cereal farmers in the Republic of Yemen through the distribution of improved, drought-tolerant wheat, sorghum and millet seeds	
Objectives:	To ensure small- and medium-scale rainfed cereal farmers' access to the minimum required appropriate cereal seeds for the spring and summer 2010 planting seasons.
Activities:	Select 30 000 beneficiary small-scale farmers who depend on rainfed production and attained zero crop due to the 2009 drought and rainfall pattern, and whose income is based solely on crop production on their land (holdings of 1 hectare or less); procure, deliver and distribute 3 000 tonnes of wheat, sorghum and millet seeds plus accompanying fertilizers to the selected beneficiaries; distribute seeds that are drought-tolerant to maximize yields in case limited and irregular rainfall continues in the spring/summer seasons of 2010; and introduce better soil and water management techniques at farm level through training and extension to enable more effective use of limited rainfall.
Beneficiaries:	210 000 individuals (150 000 children and 30 000 women).
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, local authorities and international NGOs.
Duration:	December 2009 – November 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 4 818 000.

Emergency provision of livestock feed and veterinary drugs and medicines to IDPs and their host families in the conflict-affected northern governorates of Yemen

Objectives:	To maintain the food security status of affected populations and prevent further loss of their productive assets through the provision of animal feed and veterinary health services for their remaining livestock asset base.
Activities:	Design a surveillance and treatment operation in four governorates (Sa'ada, Amran, Hajjah and Al Jawf) and train veterinary staff in its proper implementation; select beneficiary IDPs and host families according to socio-economic, asset ownership and veterinary criteria that will be identified with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in coordination with local authorities; procure, deliver and distribute approximately 6 000 tonnes of animal feed to the selected beneficiaries; carry out a vaccination campaign against PPR, including the procurement of the PPR vaccine and provision of equipment and other needs to perform the campaign; provide the insecticide coumaphos for the control of the Old World screwworm fly larvae and other medicines to treat wounds to prevent (re-)infection; and procure supplies such as syringes, veterinary needles and surgical scissors and personal protective clothing for the veterinarians who treat the animals.
Beneficiaries:	441 000 individuals (315 000 children and 63 000 women).
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, local authorities and international NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 4 081 000.

Emergency provision of livestock feed to destitute small-scale livestock owners in the Republic of Yemen

Objectives:	To sustain the food security status of vulnerable small-scale livestock owners and farmers and prevent further loss of their productive assets through the provision of animal feed for their remaining livestock asset base.
Activities:	Procurement, delivery and distribution of 10 000 tonnes of locally produced animal feed to small-scale destitute livestock owners, selected according to socio-economic and asset ownership criteria that will be determined in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and local authorities.
Beneficiaries:	154 000 individuals (110 000 children and 22 000 women).
Implementing Partners:	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, local authorities and international NGOs.
Project Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds Requested:	USD 2 948 000.