



Global acute malnutrition rates among children are above the emergency threshold.

NIGER

Background

Despite a worrying food security situation, Niger has seen some improvements in the latter half of this year. However, the country remains one of the poorest in the world and requires significant support to rebuild the agropastoral livelihoods on which 85 percent of the population relies.

Poor rainfall in 2009 resulted in a failed harvest and the widespread loss of livestock owing to a lack of fodder. A vulnerability assessment conducted in April 2010 showed that just under half the population (over 7 million people) faced moderate to severe food insecurity. At the same time, global acute malnutrition rates among children were above the emergency threshold of 15 percent at 16.7 percent. The situation was exacerbated by rising prices for basic food items and flooding in September 2010 that affected farmers and pastoralists.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

The generous response of the international community improved the humanitarian situation of many vulnerable households. Yet, in August 2010, the *Système d'alerte précoce* showed that more than one-third of the population living in vulnerable areas is food insecure. It is therefore imperative to continue rehabilitation activities to capitalize on achievements already made and to ensure livelihoods recovery as the food security problem remains.

Herders have also been affected by a serious pastoral crisis, one of the most acute of the past 20 years. They have lost almost all of their livestock and are now experiencing difficulties in ensuring their survival. In September 2010, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network reported that one-fifth of the pastoral population has lost 80 to 100 percent of its livestock.

In addition, the 2010 crisis weakened the purchasing power of farmers and pastoralists who are now facing significant debts. Access to local markets and fresh produce has been limited, which could aggravate food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among children from already vulnerable pastoral households. Increasing admissions of malnourished children to nutritional rehabilitation centres from the pastoral areas have been observed. This trend is expected to continue or even worsen during 2011.

FAO response

In collaboration with NGOs and the Government of Niger, FAO will focus on strengthening the agricultural and pastoral livelihoods of vulnerable farmers and breeders affected by climatic hazards and the food crisis. These activities will seek to reinforce the purchasing power of vulnerable households and build their resilience capacity, enabling them to secure their livelihoods.

The first component of FAO's planned programme will involve rehabilitating vulnerable households' food production capacity by distributing small healthy ruminants, animal feed and good quality seeds, as well as training beneficiaries on the use of fodder to reduce livestock losses and on managing vegetable gardens.

The second component will focus on reinforcing purchasing power while emphasizing natural resources protection. This will include cash-for-work activities and the creation of cereal banks.

The third component will target animal health protection by distributing vaccines, veterinary medicines and multivitamins, as well as strengthening the skills of veterinarians and increasing pastoralists' awareness on disease prevention.

Through the fourth component FAO will work to reinforce partners' capacities by encouraging the development of methodological tools, strengthening inter-cluster exchange, and monitoring and evaluating implemented activities. FAO will continue to play a key role in gathering, analyzing and sharing information with the aim of improving better collaboration among between humanitarian actors and technical partners and ensuring better coordination of interventions. This will promote a common understanding of and consensus on the food situation and vulnerability and lead to the development of relevant food security programmes.



PROPOSALS: FAO EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

Total funding requested: USD 36 900 700

Assistance to the rehabilitation of livelihoods of vulnerable pastoralist households	
Objectives:	To re-establish and strengthen animal and economic production capacities of livestock producers and their livelihoods.
Activities:	Provide small ruminants and animal feed to vulnerable and flood-affected households; strengthen the purchasing power of livestock producers; develop income generating activities; protect natural resources; support and protect livelihoods; reinforce production capacities; and train beneficiaries.
Beneficiaries:	2 100 000 vulnerable farmers (including 420 000 children and 1 092 000 women).
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, <i>Vétérinaires sans frontières</i> (VSF) - Belgium, national NGOs, farmers' associations.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 28 477 900.

Assistance to the rehabilitation of livelihoods of farming households affected by the 2010 food crisis in Niger	
Objectives:	To re-establish and strengthen the farming and economic production capacity of vulnerable households and their livelihoods.
Activities:	Provide crop and vegetable seeds, as well as fertilizer; restore garden sites and improve incomes through cash-for-work activities; establish cereal banks; promote training and support missions; identify and define strategies for food security activities; support methodological developments to better track food security; and set up the regional components of the Food Security Cluster.
Beneficiaries:	889 000 vulnerable farmers (including 177 800 children and 462 280 women).
Implementing partners:	Amurt International, SOS Sahel International, ARIDEL, FCMN Niya, Rayuwa Karkara.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 8 422 800.