



THE FOOD AND NUTRITION CRISIS IN THE SAHEL:

Urgent action to support the resilience of vulnerable populations

Strategic framework for regional response

**Burkina Faso, Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, and
Senegal**

VERSION 2

April 2012

Strategic response framework for the 2012 food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel

Background

In October/November 2011, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) issued an alert in response to the food and nutrition crisis emerging in the Sahel. FAO, in support of national governments, and in collaboration with other humanitarian agencies operating in West Africa and the Sahel, has prepared a strategic response framework entitled, **“The food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel: urgent action to support the resilience of vulnerable populations.”** The programme includes a regional component, as well as national interventions in Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Chad and Senegal.

To effectively protect vulnerable livelihoods and improve food and nutrition security, reducing the negative impacts of the crisis on the food production and marketing chain is critical. Conditions that will support rehabilitation and restore self-reliance must be established. In addition, securing the availability, access and consumption of nutritious food, while strengthening community and individual resilience focused on women, as they play a crucial role at all levels of varying food systems, is also imperative.

The overall objective of FAO’s proposed programme is to improve the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations in the Sahel.

The specific objective of the programme is to protect and restore resilient livelihoods of vulnerable farmers, herders, agropastoralists and agrosilvopastoralists, as well as other groups threatened by the 2012 crisis. The strategic response framework has five expected results for the programme that are outlined in the table below:

Result 1	<i>Support resilience:</i> the resilience of vulnerable populations is protected and improved.
Result 2	<i>Risk and crisis management:</i> capacities at the institutional, national and regional level, for coordination and crisis management, as well as risk reduction for food and nutrition insecurity are strengthened.
Result 3	<i>Observe to preserve:</i> needs assessments, monitoring and early warning systems (EWS) at local, national and regional levels are strengthened in a coordinated and integrated way.
Result 4	<i>Response preparedness:</i> contingency plans and crisis/disaster preparedness capacity are strengthened at the regional, national and local level.
Result 5	<i>Inform and communicate knowledge:</i> knowledge management and dissemination of good practices for risk reduction and strengthening resilience are supported at all levels.

The following three cross-cutting issues and four priority areas support the achievement of the five strategic results:

- focus on capacity development;
- strategic partnerships and alliances;
- critical importance of gender equality;

- integrated nutritional support for farming, agropastoral and pastoral households, as well as other vulnerable groups;
- critical support to pastoralists;
- sustainable management of natural resources (water, land, trees and fishing);
- combating desertification, as well as climate change adaptation; and
- importance of urban and rural migration, as well as conflict related to climate change and disasters in the region.

Based on emergency, rehabilitation and development programmes implemented in recent years and the lessons learned, the proposed interventions are developed to meet the immediate needs of the current year (first phase), by providing emergency assistance to targeted vulnerable populations in order to:

- improve food availability during dry periods;
- protect the livelihoods of farmers, pastoralists, agropastoralists and other vulnerable groups in order to prevent distress sales of assets and negative coping mechanisms, particularly the loss of livestock of the most vulnerable pastoralists; and
- mitigate the impact of rising grain prices by supplying the poorest populations.

The proposed interventions are in accordance with the five expected outcomes. The proactive measures to be implemented will reduce the impact of the crisis, partly resulting from drought, and are more effective and less costly than simple response measures. **The period before the lean season and the lean season, between March/April to September** depending on the area, are critical to food insecurity and malnutrition. **Immediate action is needed to ensure livelihood protection for the most vulnerable populations, and to avoid a full-scale crisis that could lead to famine.**

The second phase of the programme, currently being developed, will target the recovery needs for 2013, as well as longer-term needs for 2014 and 2015. The programme may be adjusted to reflect the changing food and agriculture situation, and to ensure consistency among emergency, rehabilitation and development interventions and their related investments.

The five expected results will be points of reference during the emergency, recovery/rehabilitation and development phases in order to ensure the continuity of interventions and that they be complementary. This will ensure that resilience of vulnerable populations in the Sahel is protected, and institutions at local, national and regional levels are strengthened. If a new crisis emerges, the strategic response framework and the five expected results will remain relevant. This will simplify the development of future programmes as they will be planned around existing pillars that support coordinated action and communication to be carried out 'before, during and after' chronic crises. The approach is based on the principle that it is crucial to anticipate, mitigate and prepare for a crisis, as well as move towards a disaster risk management and reduction approach in a planned, flexible and adaptable way, rather than less effective and costlier crisis management as it is often too late.

More than 16 million people are estimated to be facing food and nutrition insecurity, and require well-targeted rapid action. This includes 35 percent of the Niger's population, 20 percent in Mali, 10 percent in Burkina Faso and the Chadian Sahel and more than 20 percent of the population in Mauritania. Beyond household-level food insecurity, it is estimated that over 1 million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition. These figures will be updated regularly in light of developments. Estimates of the affected populations targeted by FAO are summarized below:

Country	Burkina Faso	Gambia	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Senegal	Chad	Total
Vulnerable persons targeted by FAO	826 000	247 495	380 825	497 500	3 426 000	350 000	470 500	6 198 320
% of the population that is food insecure	49	41	11	71	63	47	13	39

With the assistance of its resource partners, FAO is preparing to reach more than 60 percent of people affected by food and nutrition insecurity in Mauritania and the Niger, over 40 percent of people affected in Burkina Faso, Senegal and the Gambia, and more than 10 percent of those affected in Mali and Chad.

Information regarding the number of people at-risk according to their livelihood mechanisms in each country is currently unavailable. Detailed assessments must be carried out immediately, or analyses of the current number of people affected within each of the following categories:

- number of farmers;
- number of pastoralists;
- number of agropastoralists;
- number of agrosylvopastoralists;
- number of fishers; and
- number of other marginalized groups (the poorest rural populations), displaced-returned-refugees and urban/suburban migrants.

In addition, needs assessments require gender- and household-disaggregated data to ensure the implementation of appropriately targeted interventions.

Under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) strategic framework (version 2 launched 15 February 2012) aid agencies require a total of USD 724 million to respond to the food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel. This includes:

- USD 480 million to support food security and meet the needs of more than 12 million people across the region (figures rose in March to over 16 million); and
- USD 243 million to support improved nutrition across the region and support more than 1 million children suffering from severe acute malnutrition and more than 2 million children suffering from moderate acute malnutrition.

FAO has estimated that the immediate funds required to protect the resilience of farmers, pastoralists, agropastoralists, agrosylvipastoralists and other marginal groups in 2012 amount to about **USD 80 million**. These funds will support approximately **6.2 million people** in the Sahel region, **nearly 39 percent of the estimated 16 million people that are food and nutrition insecure**.

These needs represent only 15 percent of the total IASC response strategy funds for food security, and only 10 percent of the estimated 724 million for food and nutrition security. **To-date, only 21 percent of FAO's funding needs have been met.**

Country	Priorities	Targeted beneficiaries	Funding requirements for 2012 response (USD)	Funding received (USD)	Unmet requirements (USD)
BURKINA FASO	Assistance to farmers (gardening, grain production, market), and to pastoralists (veterinary and livestock breeding inputs, fodder)	826 000	14 873 000	1 430 000	13 443 000
CHAD	Assistance to drought-affected farmers and pastoralists, reduce malnutrition, support to information and coordination system	470 500	10 357 000	2 810 123	7 546 877
GAMBIA	Assistance to vulnerable farmers	247 495	5 076 945	1 426 171	3 650 774
MALI	Assistance to farmers, pastoralists and foresters and nutrition (agriculture livestock, forestry)	380 825	10 050 000	2 741 720	7 308 280
MAURITANIA	Assistance to vulnerable farmers and pastoralists (fodder crops, animal feed) and nutrition	497 500	9 000 000	1 921 554	7 078 446
NIGER	Assistance to vulnerable pastoralists and farmers	3 426 000	23 444 200	3 507 713	19 936 487
SENEGAL	Assistance to vulnerable farmers	350 000	5 100 000	2 353 002	2 746 998
REGIONAL PROGRAMMES	Support to countries and the region with food security coordination and needs evaluation and analysis		1 127 500	348 000	779 500
TOTAL		6 198 320	79 028 645	16 538 283	62 490 362

In accordance with the five expected results, the components of the technical emergency, rehabilitation and development interventions that will target farmers, pastoralists, agropastoralists, agrosylvipastoralists and other marginalized vulnerable groups between 2012 and 2015, as well as sustainable management of natural resources (water, land, forests, rangelands, fisheries) and multiple and climate risk reduction are being developed and will be reported as soon as possible.

The immediate interventions to protect resilience, which have been proposed by FAO, offer viability by directly supporting the livelihoods of vulnerable populations and contributing to their self-reliance and dignity. Programme details and immediate activities that have been planned for 2012 are presented in the region and country fact sheets and are available on the FAO Sahel Web <http://www.fao.org/crisis/sahel>