



Central African Republic



13 January 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

- 2.2 million people need immediate humanitarian assistance; and one in five Central Africans is now internally displaced. These figures are likely to rise as the conflict places millions at risk of a full-scale food and nutrition security crisis due to low production in 2013 coupled with prevailing chronic countrywide malnutrition, extreme poverty and inappropriate sanitation.
- The results of the [Multisectorial Initial Rapid Assessment](#) (MIRA) undertaken by FAO and its partners indicate that, in spite of insecurity, **78 percent of farmers will be cultivating** in the coming weeks. However, **94 percent of communities** report that they do **not** have **enough seeds** to plant for the next agricultural season.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has scaled up its presence and response in the [Central African Republic](#) to restore agriculture-based livelihoods and improve food security.
- **FAO aims to support 75 000 crisis-hit families** in the Central African Republic to enable them produce their own food, protect their scarce resources and earn some income. The success of the main 2014 maize, sorghum and millet planting seasons, starting in March and May respectively, will be a turning point for food security.
- More funds are needed to enable affected women and men to resume food production, feed their families and improve their overall food security and economic well-being.

BACKGROUND

- **Widespread civil insecurity caused a sharp reduction in 2013 crop production**, and is likely to severely impact the 2014 cropping season.
- Due to persistent insecurity, households have relied on stress or crisis coping mechanisms, putting their livelihoods at risk.
- **Food prices are high and volatile due to severe market disruptions.**
- The **MIRA** confirmed that food reserves are almost non-existent. People interviewed indicated that they were now eating just one meal a day, compared with two to three meals per day prior to the crisis. All communities reported that livelihood assets have been lost – abandoned or looted. The MIRA also indicated that in spite of insecurity, 78 percent of farmers plan to cultivate in the coming weeks, confirming the importance of cropping and livestock rearing in ensuring their income and access to food. However, 94 percent of communities reported they will not have enough seeds to plant for the next agricultural season.

Clusters activated:

- Coordination: OCHA
- Early recovery: UNDP
- Education: UNICEF/COOPI
- Emergency Telecoms: WFP
- Food Security: FAO/WFP
- Health: WHO
- Logistics: WFP
- Refugees: UNHCR
- Nutrition: UNICEF
- Protection: UNHCR
- WASH: UNICEF

CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURE

- ❖ **Disruption of market linkages due to insecurity.**
- ❖ **Production has been hampered by insecurity.**
- ❖ **Standing crops, stored seed/grain and productive assets have been lost, leaving the population food insecure and unable to resume crop production.**
- ❖ **Lack of immediate assistance will trigger further losses and longer-term suffering.**
- ❖ **Delayed action will lead to a degradation of food insecurity.**

PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS

FAO can prevent further degradation of livelihoods and missed planting opportunities with timely donor support, saving families from a domino effect of continued losses. Restoring productive assets is crucial to enable crisis-hit farmers produce their own food and take advantage of local opportunities.

FAO's scaled-up response

In response to the aggravation of the situation in the Central African Republic, FAO has taken immediate action and set up a multidisciplinary team in Bangui with support from its regional and subregional offices as well as its headquarters in Rome. Three sub-offices are also being opened in the town of Bossangoa, Bouar and Bambari to serve the most affected areas of the country.

FAO is regularly coordinating joint field visits with partners to assess the food security situation and the needs of conflict-affected populations.

In view of the most urgent needs, FAO is preparing distributions of agricultural inputs to women and men farmers in the most affected regions to allow them « sowing peace » and to protect and restore resilient livelihoods.

FAO also plays a key role in food security coordination mechanisms. As co-lead of the Food Security Cluster, FAO works closely with partners to improve the response to the urgent needs related to food security and livelihoods. FAO is committed to facilitate access to up-to-date and reliable information on food and livelihood needs and to ensure that harmonized food security analyses are used to improve decision-making and strategic response planning.

FAO's prioritized agricultural assistance include:

- **Immediate support to vegetable production** so that assisted farmers can harvest vegetables in only six to eight weeks. This support will be provided in the most affected regions of the country and in urban and peri-urban areas of Bangui where displaced persons have expressed the need to receive agriculture inputs to quickly resume food production and sell surplus in local markets to generate some income.
- **Support to 2014 main planting season– a turning point for food security:** as missed planting opportunities can be prevented through timely provision of seeds and fertilizers for the main 2014 maize planting season, starting in early March in the central and southern regions of the country, and the sorghum and millet planting season, starting in May in the northern region.
- **Restore vital rural infrastructure:** FAO proposes a twin-track approach for the urgent rehabilitation of productive infrastructure. Cash-for-work provides: (i) much needed income to cover affected families food needs and protect their scarce resources; while (ii) rebuilding community-based assets.
- **Peace-building dialogue:** between communities with joint social and economic activities, and involving women's groups to showcase mutual benefits of such activities.
- **Post-harvest handling and market linkages:** to stimulate demand and supply in order to revitalize the local economy of the vulnerable rural communities.

FAO has already mobilized funding to support food production, covering around 40 000 households out of the 75 000 targeted in the 100-day plan. An additional USD 5 million is required to protect and rebuild the resilience of all the targeted affected farming families.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- All up-to-date information is available on our Web site: www.fao.org/emergencies
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