



Central African Republic



24 June 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

- The events in the Central African Republic over the last 18 months have left more than **2.5 million people in need of humanitarian** assistance and have displaced one out of five people (around 536 500 IDPs out of a total population of 4.6 million).
- **Localised security incidents continue to be reported**, including several attacks on trucks transporting humanitarian aid; events during the beginning of June in Bangui and Bambari led to a delay of ten days in the delivery of agricultural kits. However, the majority of farmers across the country are engaged in planting activities. To meet their needs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is committed to provide appropriate assistance within its funding capacity.
- **About 70 793 households (88 percent out of the initial target of 80 000) have already received FAO crop seeds and tools.** FAO has established strategic partnerships with 17 national and international NGOs to implement the distribution plan in rural areas. Each family is receiving 25 kg of crop seeds and two hoes to plant in time and produce at least 500 kg of groundnuts, maize and rice that will contribute to feed them for about four months. As the seed distribution demand has been constantly increasing by identified farming families willing to plant, **the FAO target has now been revised to over 88 156 households to be reached by the end of June.**
- While the main planting season finishes at the end of June, FAO has received additional funding for the July short cycle agricultural season to support an additional 30 000 households.
- **The Integrated Phase Classification (IPC)** carried out in late April 2014 indicates that 45 percent of the rural population (1.7 million people) is food insecure and has been classified in Crisis (26 percent) and Emergency (19 percent) Phases.
- FAO has also secured **additional support from donors to reinforce the resilience of an another 50 000 households**, who are mostly members of women's associations, to help them build up their financial capacities, agriculture techniques and social protection to improve food and nutrition security.

BACKGROUND

In light of the findings of the **Multisectoral Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA)**, the [Revised Strategic Response Plan](#) was launched on 19 January, outlining the humanitarian strategy for the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2014. The **MIRA** confirmed that food reserves are almost non-existent. People interviewed indicated that they were now eating just one meal a day. In spite of insecurity, 78 percent of farmers were planning to cultivate, confirming the importance of cropping and livestock rearing to ensure their income and access to food. However, 94 percent of communities reported they would not have enough seeds to plant for the next agricultural season. People outside Bangui must urgently resume production activities, without which they cannot eat, generate income or even relocate.

The results of the **Markets and Food Security Assessment mission carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP)** released in April indicate that the agricultural sector was the most affected by the crisis, which contracted by 37 percent and agricultural production declined by 38 percent. Agriculture, which is the backbone of the economy, represents 57 percent of the GDP and is crucial to restore production. The joint FAO/WFP assessment mission warns that the humanitarian operation in CAR over the next 18 months will be long and expensive, especially if the current planting season is missed.

CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURE

- ❖ Despite efforts from FAO and partners, large numbers of farmers do not have adequate inputs to ensure diversified sources of food and income for their households.
- ❖ Disruption of market linkages due to insecurity and bad road access since the start of the rainy season.
- ❖ Insecurity and limited size of the market have increased procurement and logistics costs by 40 percent compared with previous interventions.
- ❖ Standing crops, stored seed/grain and productive assets have been widely lost since the start of the conflict in December 2012, leaving the population food insecure and unable to resume crop production.
- ❖ Rural populations have been affected by the numerous Séléka and anti-Balaka clashes, yet their protection is key in order for FAO and its partners to access the areas where they are located to implement humanitarian and resilience programmes.
- ❖ Lack of immediate assistance will affect the resumption of activity and risks to trigger further losses and longer-term suffering.

PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS

FAO can prevent further deteriorating of livelihoods and provide planting opportunities with timely donor support, saving families from a domino effect of continued losses, as well as preventing farmers from adopting negative coping strategies with long-term effects (joining militias and bandits, economic migration, etc.). Restoring productive assets is crucial to enable crisis-hit farmers to produce their own food and take advantage of local opportunities to generate income to cover their needs as they return to their villages. In response to the aggravation of the situation in CAR, FAO provided vegetable producers with immediate assistance before the start of the crop season, distributing vegetable kits in February to women's groups and displaced farming families in Bangui from both religious groups. In March, FAO started distributing agricultural kits in Bossangoa for the current agricultural campaign.

As co-lead of the Food Security Cluster, FAO works closely with partners to improve the food security and livelihoods response. Strategic partnership between FAO and WFP is particularly important to ensure a complementary response by providing crop seeds and food rations to limit the risk of planting material consumption.

FAO and NGO partners have distributed agricultural kits to 70 793 families to plant groundnuts, maize and rice. Each family is receiving 25 kg of crop seeds and two hoes to plant in time (before the end of June) and produce their own food. Thus far, nearly 2 200 tonnes of seeds and tools have been delivered to NGO partners across the country (Bambari, Bangui, Bouar and Bossangoa) for distribution to farming families. Throughout the course of the intervention, the seed distribution demand has been constantly increasing as more farming households willing to plant are identified. The FAO target has now been revised to over 88 156 families to be reached by the end of June.

FAO has recently received additional funding to provide short cycle seed varieties to assist 30 000 families. This will enable farmers to plant seeds of beans, millet, sesame and sorghum until the end of July.

Extensive discussions with CAR's Ministry of Rural Development, NGO partners and farmer's associations show that farmers across the country are actively taking part in the agricultural campaign despite localized insecurity. Early harvests are expected starting in August. As a safety measure, farmers are planting 'strategic' crops (cassava and sweet potatoes) in bush areas where they have been hiding and can return in case of attacks, as they are less visible to looters. Other crop seeds (groundnut, maize and rice) are planted near to the villages where they are returning.

FAO priority agricultural assistance

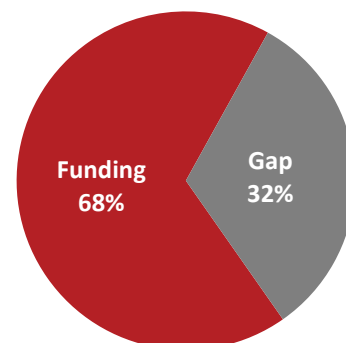
Immediate support to production of staple food and vegetable: These two production systems (short and long cycles) are complementary, which allows the farmers to access food throughout the year. Vegetable production is mainly initiated in urban and peri-urban areas such as Bangui and Bossangoa to generate food and incomes.

Building resilience through producer and women's associations: FAO is developing an approach that will help families to accumulate and diversify assets by building their capacities in terms of agriculture techniques, financial capacities and social protection at community level. This approach, called "*Caisses de Résilience*", has been successfully implemented in crisis and post crisis contexts in several countries in the region. Participating families will be engaged in contractual production of quality seeds and food, support to school gardening and feeding, nutrition surveillance, and cash transfer initiatives to boost their community managed savings and loans schemes. After the harvests, these activities will be completed with the distribution of small processing machines and the establishment of food and seed reserves.

Social cohesion building: FAO is partnering with specialized national and international institutions to integrate concepts of peace dialogue around social and productive activities, such as agriculture and rural livelihoods.

Total funding

FAO total funding needs: USD 45 million
Total funds received: USD 30.5 million



**PLANNED
BENEFICIARIES
150 000 FAMILIES**

Under the Strategic Response Plan, FAO has requested USD 45 million to support 150 000 farming families, and received over USD 30.5 million¹. This enables FAO to assist 110 000 farming families for the current agricultural season in 14 of the 16 prefectures. However, **an additional USD 14.5 million is still required** to provide livelihood support to the population immediately after the planting season. The objective is to build resilience through a comprehensive approach addressing social, technical and financial aspects. These activities will enable families to generate regular income before the first harvest and purchase food from the market. As they are not dependent on the rainy season, resilience activities provide opportunities for households to diversify and accumulate assets on a regular basis year round.

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¹ USD 3 million are committed for activities that are not covered by the SRP: aquaculture, cluster coordination, training, rice irrigation, etc.