



IN NUMBERS



350 000 people

affected in Fiji (40 percent of the population)



100 percent

of crops damaged in hardest-hit areas



USD 1.56 million

still needed for FAO-led emergency and recovery activities

KEY MESSAGES

- **Damage to crops and livestock is estimated at USD 104 million, while damages to fisheries (not yet fully assessed) are also critical.** With much of the country relying on subsistence production to meet their food needs, restoring agriculture and fishery-based livelihoods is essential to avoid dependency on food aid in the coming months.
- **Affected families urgently need food and agricultural assistance.** More than 500 000 fresh planting materials (kumala and dalo) and some 90 000 packets of seeds. In addition, seedlings, animal feed and sugar for bees are being distributed to affected farmers.
- **Fijian women – a majority of whom rely on agriculture as their sole source of income – are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, and must be a key focus of response efforts.**
- **FAO still requires USD 1.56 million** (against its appeal of USD 2.89 million) to provide immediate crop, livestock and fisheries support to 25 370 cyclone-affected people. An ongoing Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) aims to identify the early, medium- and long-term recovery and reconstruction needs, which are expected to be greater.

MAP

FIJI: Tropical Cyclone Winston

Source: OCHA



Government priority areas for emergency response are shown on the map in red and are numbered in order of priority.

1. Lau group
2. Lomaiviti group (Koro)
3. Lomaiviti group (Ovalau)
4. Taveuni
5. Cakaudrove West
6. Bua
7. Tailevu & Naitasiri
8. Ra
9. Ba (eastern)
10. Ba (western)
11. Nadroga & Navosa
12. Mamanuca group

BACKGROUND

On 20 and 21 February, Category 5 Tropical Cyclone (TC) Winston cut a path of destruction across Fiji, causing widespread damage in all four divisions: Eastern, Northern, Western and Central. With sustained winds of 230 km per hour and gusts of 325 km per hour, the tropical cyclone was one of the most severe to ever hit the South Pacific. An estimated 350 000 Fijians were affected (roughly 40 percent of the population). The Government of Fiji has extended a State of Natural Disaster to 19 April and estimates the total damage at USD 500 million. Heavy rain caused widespread flooding one month after TC Winston, and TC Zena (Category 1) – which passed through Fiji in early April – caused moderate damages.

CHALLENGES FACING FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Damage to crops, livestock and fisheries is extensive. In the most-affected areas, up to 100 percent of crops were damaged or destroyed due to TC Winston. The death of small livestock has diminished vital sources of animal protein, and sheds and fences need repairing. Damage to crops and livestock is estimated at USD 104 million, while damage to fisheries (fishing gear, vessels and engines) is also critical. This has limited the amount of fish available in local markets, affecting food security. In addition, Fiji's key vegetable growing area was badly hit by flooding from recent heavy rains and to a lesser extent TC Zena. As a result, some agricultural rehabilitation works (i.e. replanted crops) carried out following TC Winston have been lost, mainly in the area of Ra.

Subsistence agriculture – a primary food source for most Fijians – was especially hit. A large portion of Fiji's rural and outer island population is engaged in agriculture, relying on their own production to meet their food needs. Some cyclone-hit areas saw the total destruction of fruit-bearing and other trees, as well as backyard vegetable gardens. Root crops – a staple for both rural and urban households – also sustained heavy damage. The export industry will be faced with the challenges of meeting export demands due to insufficient supply and maintaining operating costs.

Affected families need urgent support to avoid food shortages and quickly replant fast-growing crops. With many subsistence crops ruined and markets damaged or inaccessible, the availability of meat and fresh produce is limited. Farming and fishing families risk becoming dependent on food aid in the coming months if their livelihoods are not restored. Women are particularly vulnerable, as agriculture is a primary source of income for most Fijian women (and one of the few sources available to them).

The cyclone has aggravated the effects of El Niño-related events, including a drought which has already diminished food production and access to fresh water over the past year. The combined effects will further reduce peoples' capacity to purchase food to feed their families, or agricultural inputs in order to resume production.

FAO RESPONSE

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES



Crops

Vegetable seeds
Planting materials
Organic fertilizers
Hand tools



Livestock

Feed for poultry
Poultry restocking
Sheep and goat restocking
Piggery replacement



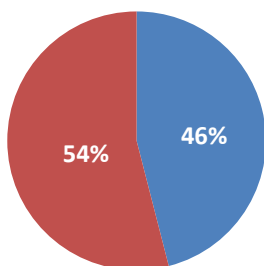
Fisheries

Fish feed
Restocking of fish ponds
Repair/replacement of lost/damaged vessels, engines and fishing gear

ACTIONS TAKEN TO-DATE

- ✓ An FAO multidisciplinary team is supporting the most-affected areas through three emergency response projects which will:
 1. Ensure that affected communities have timely, appropriate access to emergency inputs (crop, livestock, fisheries).
 2. Rehabilitate nursery facilities, re-establish damaged food and crop plantations and home gardens, help restart livelihoods through support to fishing households as well as livestock production for affected farming households.
 3. Help the Government of Fiji to: prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases; support communities' access to construction timber, facilitating housing reconstruction; enhance income-generating opportunities; and provide support to build back better fisheries-based livelihoods.
- ✓ A global Food Security Cluster Officer in Fiji is assisting the Fiji Food Security Cluster.
- ✓ FAO has provided assistance to the United Nations Disaster Assessment team.

FUNDING



■ Funding received:
USD 1.33 million

■ Funding gap:
USD 1.56 million

FAO has appealed for
USD 2.89 million

To assist
25 370 people

Donors: Belgium, Central Emergency Response Fund and FAO.

FAO'S RESILIENCE WORK

FAO's resilience work is centered on supporting agricultural livelihood systems before, during and after shocks – including improving risk governance, early warning and vulnerability reduction measures, as well as supporting countries to prepare for and respond to shocks when they occur.

Ongoing planning and response efforts in Fiji build on a strong collaboration among FAO and partners in the country and region in disaster preparedness work prior to Tropical Cyclone Winston. Before the cyclone hit, FAO was already working closely with the Government and local communities to build capacity in conducting PDNAs. The assessments now being carried out by national units have benefited from this support.

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