

FAO's RESPONSE TO THE 2012 SAHEL CRISIS



**Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Chad
the Gambia
Mali
Mauritania
the Niger
Senegal**



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BACKGROUND

The 2012 food security crisis in the Sahel – driven by chronic poverty, malnutrition, high food prices, drought and low agricultural production – affected 18.7 million people across the region. The crisis was aggravated by the conflict in Mali and the threat of a Desert Locust infestation that put at risk the livelihoods of 50 million people.

Many of the poorest households, already vulnerable from recurring shocks and crises, were forced to sell their assets, reduce the number of meals per day or move with their livestock earlier than usual in search of grazing land. Pastoralists, in particular, were at risk. Regional instability hampered their movement while water scarcity, depleted pastures and fodder shortages made it difficult for them to keep their animals nourished and healthy. Many refugees from Mali had travelled with their livestock, adding pressure to already scarce natural resources and creating tension with local populations.

FAO'S INTERVENTIONS IN 2012

Rebuilding the livelihoods of 5.2 million vulnerable people through agriculture and livestock assistance

FAO distributed cereal and vegetable seeds, fertilizers, small tools and material for building fences **to more than 4.1 million people** so they could produce their own food, diversify their diet and earn additional income. Vulnerable farmers were trained on nutrition as well as food preparation and use to improve their nutritional status. Vegetable production got a boost from FAO's efforts to conserve soil and water and restore degraded lands, while work to improve the storage, processing and transportation of agricultural goods helped strengthen the food chain and marketing sector.

FAO supported the livelihoods of 1.1 million herders, distributing emergency veterinary inputs, multivitamins and mineral food supplements for livestock. FAO also helped restock herds by providing already vaccinated small ruminants and poultry. FAO worked with the Governments of Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger to monitor desert locust infestations and to take pre-emptive measures to minimize damages to food crops and pasture.

FAO's Sub-regional Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa/Sahel (REOWA), based in Dakar, Senegal, has played a crucial role in **strengthening early warning systems in the Sahel**, helping to analyse the immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity, evaluate risks and early warning to inform decision-making at national and regional level and provide technical support to the Cadre Harmonisé. REOWA has also guided FAO's emergency and rehabilitation programme on the ground, acting as a liaison between the various FAO offices and the network of humanitarian actors in the subregion.

FAO'S RESPONSE

Building resilience - moving from a reactive to a proactive and integrated approach

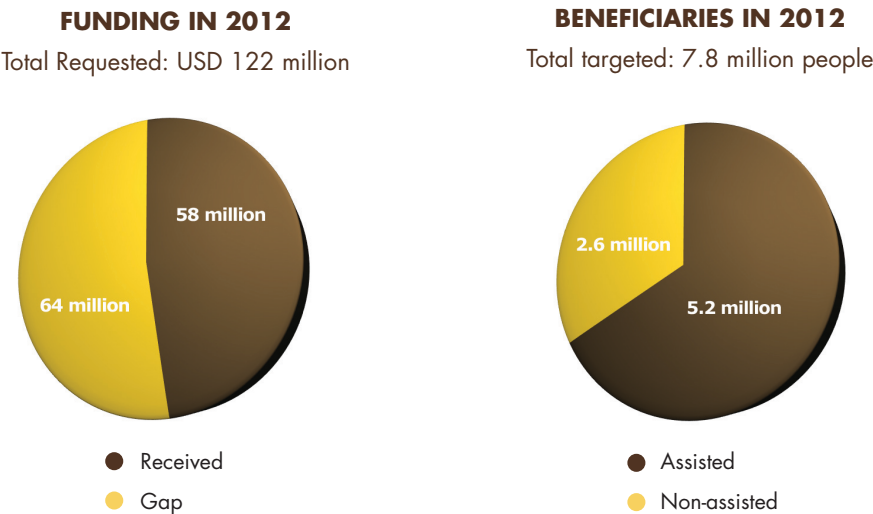
FAO and many of its food security partners have shifted to a more proactive and integrated approach in responding to emergencies – one that **protects and restores livelihoods while improving food and nutrition security and strengthening the resilience of people to withstand future shocks**. FAO is providing longer-term support through a combined focus on rehabilitation, investment and development in an effort to prevent future food crises in the Sahel. This is in line with FAO's Strategic Response Framework, entitled "The Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel: Urgent action to support the resilience of vulnerable populations", which sets out priorities for humanitarian support as well as medium- to longer-term interventions.

DONOR SUPPORT

Livelihood interventions save lives and strengthen resilience

Early interventions and prevention measures are cost-effective, helping reduce human suffering down the line – as well as dependence on humanitarian aid. FAO, together with the World Food Programme and other humanitarian agencies in West Africa and the Sahel, warned of an imminent crisis in October/November 2011. Generous contributions from donors, amounting to USD 58 million (48 percent of the USD 122 million requested) enabled FAO to carry out livelihood interventions that assisted more than 5.2 million people. Donors included: Belgium; the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection; Finland; France; South Africa; Sweden; the United Kingdom; and the United States. FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme also contributed to respond to immediate needs.

However, important livelihood needs were unaddressed as funds received in 2012 represented only 9 percent of the total funds received (USD 644 million) for the entire food security sector in the Sahel. If the livelihoods of vulnerable people are not rebuilt after a crisis, even the smallest shocks will require humanitarian support.



LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS IN 2013

10.3 million people still at risk of food insecurity

The food and nutrition situation in the Sahel continues to be affected by: i) recurrent and frequent crises that have weakened livelihoods and eroded resilience; ii) chronic food insecurity and malnutrition in the region; and iii) the current conflict in Mali, which has had repercussions for the region and beyond.

Thanks to donor support, FAO, together with partners, has already helped more than 5.2 million people. **Continued support is needed to strengthen and rebuild the livelihoods of those still affected by the 2012 food crisis.** Although extreme food insecurity was averted, and the worst of the crisis was mitigated, 10.3 million people are still at risk of food and nutrition insecurity, with more than 1.4 million children at risk of severe acute malnutrition in 2013.

FAO is requesting USD 135.3 million for livelihood interventions across the Sahel in 2013, including those related to the conflict in Mali. This estimate is based on the current situation and could be revised depending on the evolving regional situation.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FAO

Work in 2012 in one of the Sahel countries - Burkina Faso

Agriculture: FAO provided 90 tonnes of certified rice seed, 270 tonnes of NPK and 180 tonnes of urea to 10 005 farming households to increase their rice production. In Ouindigui village, 778 beneficiary households, including 155 women, planted 77.5 hectares of land, producing 465 tonnes of rice (about 6 tonnes/hectare) – an increase of about 600 percent, compared with 2011. This meant more food in the households and more income through the sale of surplus crops.



Ouindigui (Loroum Province, North Region)

Fodder: FAO distributed 11 tonnes of cowpea seed and 3 tonnes of sorghum seed to 2 000 agropastoral households, helping them to produce quality fodder for their livestock during the 2013 dry season. Many beneficiaries were able to produce more than 70 bundles of cowpea fodder worth an estimated USD 160.



Beneficiaries who received fodder seeds

Livestock: With CERF funding, FAO provided 4 000 pastoral households with 2 000 tonnes of animal feed to fatten their cattle, sheep and goats. Healthy cattle provided draught power, enabling farmers to plough their fields during the 2013 cropping season. Families were also able to fetch a good price for their animals in the markets.



Distributing animal feed

A vaccinated cow

Beneficiary who received animal feed

FAO supported poultry breeding, providing 6 000 vulnerable households each with 10 local hens and 1 rooster. After five months, many producers had over 60 hens of varying ages and were able to sell their surplus to buy additional agricultural inputs. Women in particular benefited from the poultry distribution.



Women who received poultry from the FAO project