

## FAO provides lasting support to build food secure futures for the people of South Sudan



31/7/2015- The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) leads global efforts to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. In South Sudan, this entails closely linking short-term crisis response activities with longer-term development actions with the goal of helping millions of South Sudanese farmers, fishers and livestock owners to build resilient livelihoods.

FAO's support to the people of South Sudan has been longstanding. Prior to the signing of the CPA, FAO was helping to build capacities within the newly emerging nation's institutions through massive, comprehensive interventions like the Sudan Productivity Capacity Recovery Programme and the Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action.

Since the onset of the current crisis, FAO has significantly scaled up efforts to provide immediate, lifesaving assistance, while remaining strongly committed to continuing development programmes in less affected areas. With over USD 60 million generously contributed by donor partners, as well as FAO's own resources, the Organization's multi-year development projects in South Sudan are being implemented throughout the country with the goal of building resilient livelihoods. All activities are formulated and implemented through the combined efforts of FAO, government counterparts, national partners and the people of South Sudan themselves. **Key ongoing initiatives include Farmer and Pastoralist Field Schools, seed multiplication and support to build national and community seed systems, strengthening the capacities of extension services, natural resource management, boosting fisheries industries, addressing land tenure issues and agroforestry, improving slaughterhouse practices and producing critical information on agriculture and food security.**

Although the need for emergency relief remains high, resilience and development work will continue to lay the foundation for recovery and reduce the need for humanitarian assistance in the long run. FAO's objectives for development include increasing market-oriented production, strengthening farmer-based organizations and cooperatives, enhancing service providers' engagement in agribusiness, building the capacity of the Government in food security information and analysis and improving community stability and resilience to crises.

### Strengthening institutional capacities

The recent crisis has weakened the country's already tenuous institutions. FAO has therefore continued its long-term efforts to build the capacities of local, state and national government institutions. Over the past year, over 20 Letters of Agreement have been signed between FAO and the Government at national and state levels. Government-led development and emergency initiatives, that are supported and implemented by FAO, range from livestock vaccination campaigns to food security information and analysis, with partnerships existing in seven of the ten states.

FAO strongly supports the institutionalization of robust agriculture and food security information systems at national and state levels. Through training ministry staff in data collection and analysis, to conducting year round assessments on agriculture, livestock, markets, rainfall and household livelihoods, these efforts have supported the development and use of the **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** – a system that analyses the severity of food insecurity and malnutrition. This collaboration involves over 30 partners, including UN agencies, NGOs and multiple ministries such as the Ministry of Health, National Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Cooperatives and Rural Development. The IPC provides critical information for all stakeholders in agriculture, food security and livelihood responses through information, analysis and coordination. It makes a vital contribution to efforts to link emergency relief with early recovery and development work. Given the important role of the government in sustainable development, FAO proudly supports the Food Security Council Secretariat of the Republic of South Sudan and has secured funding to enhance this work and help facilitate events for its endeavours.

FAO works closely with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Industries to improve animal health, which includes support in monitoring and responding to livestock disease outbreaks. More than 200 Ministry staff have already been trained in livestock disease identification, reporting and tracking. Thanks largely to these efforts, last year South Sudan became the newest member of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and submitted reports on livestock disease outbreaks, with the aim of fighting animal diseases at the regional and global levels. Additionally, FAO is committed to regional efforts to improve cross-border livestock movement and trade between South Sudan and Uganda. Livestock can suffer serious health issues caused by transboundary animal disease outbreaks during cross-border movements. To address this serious concern, a high level meeting took place in May between the Departments of Veterinary Services from South Sudan and Uganda, FAO and government representatives. Regional strategies have since been developed, aimed at promoting safe and beneficial trade in livestock and livestock products between the two countries.

### **Improving service delivery**

The livestock situation in South Sudan remains of serious concern and access to extension and veterinary services continues to be a major constraint to development. This year alone, FAO has trained and equipped hundreds of community-based animal health workers, who provide basic veterinary services to their communities. New initiatives are underway to improve extension services over the coming years, such as by establishing a registration process for community based animal health workers and strengthening their capacities through year-round trainings.

FAO uses Farmer Field School and Pastoralist Field School (FFS/PFS) approaches to strengthen extension services and improve agriculture practices. FAO began using FFS/PFS in South Sudan in 2006, and thanks to the support of donors, over 30 schools now operate with thousands of members. Working closely with trained extension officers, the schools provide farmers and pastoralists with hands-on learning experiences and support services in a community-based atmosphere.



*FAOSS cold chain technician and trainer Uwa Kenyi*

In an effort to improve the delivery and availability of livestock vaccines around the country, FAO is working to re-establish the cold chain system. Cold chains are crucial to ensure adequate storage and transport of temperature sensitive vaccines. During the crisis, most of the country's cold chain facilities were destroyed, with huge implications for animal health. For 2015, FAO procured over USD 1 million worth of equipment for the cold chain, comprising solar and electrical refrigerators, cold boxes, vaccine carriers and temperature monitoring devices.

FAO's cold chain technicians have crisscrossed the country conducting assessments, repairing and installing equipment and training cold chain operators. In the coming weeks, FAO will complete the re-construction of South Sudan's central cold chain facility located at the National Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries Industries in Juba, Central Equatoria State. These efforts are not only developing stronger institutions for animal health practices, but contributing to more efficient livestock disease and outbreak responses.

### **Creating local solutions for the seed sector**

Many farmers in South Sudan struggle to access basic agricultural inputs, such as seeds and tools. FAO is developing local solutions so farmers can better access seeds, working with farmers to produce and multiply higher quality seeds. FAO further enhances community-based seed systems by organizing seed fairs that in 2015 have helped over 20,000 farming households to access seeds and other essential agricultural inputs.

In 2014, FAO identified 600 progressive seed growers in Central Equatoria State and worked with them over the year to improve wider access to quality seed in 2015. By training farmers in seed multiplication and mitigation of post-harvest losses through better community storage, local seeds were produced for recollection and sale. To ensure that farmers meet expected seed standards, seed quality control committees were set up at the county levels. Under FAO's Emergency Livelihood Response Programme (ELRP), over 1000 tonnes of locally produced and recollected crop seeds were purchased for the emergency distribution campaign, directly inserting over USD 3 million into the local seed sector. Locally produced seeds from farmers in less-affected states are reaching the fields of farmers in conflict-affected states, coining the term "seeds for peace".

This year, FAO is working with 1,600 farmers in the Equatorias on seed multiplication, with the target of producing 1,600 tonnes of a variety of seeds locally for the 2016 planting season. Other new projects are sowing the seeds of innovation, including a regional initiative that will research and assess the adaptability of “quinoa” seeds in South Sudan to increase crop and dietary diversity. Another project is in the process of procuring maize foundation seed that is tolerant to maize lethal necrosis disease, a detrimental virus that can destroy maize crop and wipe out entire farms. These seeds will be multiplied at government seed research centres and will be made available for farmers to access and grow. Additionally, new seed cleaning and processing machines have been purchased by FAO and will be distributed to community-based seed producers and farmer cooperatives. FAO is increasing long-term support for the development of the local seed sector by working closely with MAFCRD in developing new strategies to take place over the coming years. These efforts will give farmers increased access to quality seeds.

### Immediate emergency projects with longer-term impacts

In many areas of South Sudan, insecure or inadequate land tenure rights increase vulnerability, hunger and poverty and lead to conflict and environmental degradation. This year, FAO launched a workshop on Land Tenure Guidelines, which is critical to enable South Sudan’s agriculture sector to reach its considerable potential as a key pillar in a diversified national economy. The development of Agricultural Land Tenure Guidelines can not only minimize conflict, but is essential for ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably and promote equitable development by making resources accessible for a range of people for including women and those who are marginalized.

FAO recognizes the essential role women play in agriculture and improving household food security and nutrition. Development programmes provide women with opportunities for income generation and increased access to nutritious food sources. Through a voucher scheme project, extremely vulnerable women and IDPs are receiving vouchers from FAO that they can use to “buy” fresh vegetables, milk and fish. These items are produced by local suppliers, who have been trained by FAO on food production and business management. In the long term, this effort strengthens food security through promoting market-oriented skills that do not compromise the sustainability of natural resources for future generations. The project is helping to build stronger local economies by establishing better market linkages in communities. Women and displaced populations are gaining immediate access to food that diversifies their diets and improves overall family nutrition. And in parallel, the initiative is laying the foundation for peace building and conflict resolution between IDP and host communities, leaving behind a lasting impact for further development.



*FAOSS voucher scheme project in Nimule, EE*

Additionally, FAO is directing new programming efforts towards women and youth in urban areas. There has been an increase in the food insecurity of the urban poor due to the current economic downturn and other factors. Addressing the main underlying causes of new vulnerabilities of urban populations is indispensable to building resilience and strengthening food security and nutrition. The programme will also facilitate rural-urban links to build sustainable food security across communities.

FAO’s emergency distribution of over 20,000 fuel-efficient stoves to vulnerable women and IDP households reduces the risks associated with gender-based violence for women

and children who are the main collectors of firewood. It also complements efforts of FAO’s natural resources sector projects. The initiative decreases pressure on forests and woodlands in highly concentrated IDP settlements and lessens the demand for fuel or charcoal by introducing stoves and cooking techniques that require fewer resources. This year FAO and partners published water harvesting guidelines a reference document for the mainstreaming of sustainable natural resource management strategies in water harvesting structures in South Sudan.

FAO is committed to developing the country’s enormous agricultural, fisheries and livestock potential, which is the pathway for a flourishing and prosperous future for South Sudan. FAO’s combined development, resilience and emergency efforts ensure the greatest possible impact and efficiency for sustainable development and food security with the hope of building a more dynamic agriculture sector in South Sudan that will improve food security and drive future economic growth.