



SITUATION UPDATE

The Sahel crisis



22 April 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite good agricultural production in 2012 and good conditions for pastoralists, the situation in the Sahel remains critical mostly due to the impact of the 2012 crisis, as well as previous recent crises. Approximately **10.3 million people remain food insecure in 2013** and over **1.4 million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition**.
- **Large population movements** are reported as a consequence of the conflict in Mali. It is estimated that there are currently **292 648 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mali** and **175 211 refugees** in neighbouring countries, mainly Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger.
- **The risk of food insecurity is growing in northern Mali**, where it is estimated that **585 000 people are food insecure and 1.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity**.
- Based on current estimates, **FAO is requesting a total of USD 135.3 million for 2013** in order to support almost 6 million people, including those affected by the Malian conflict, through livelihood interventions in the Sahel. So far, only USD 5.1 million has been received. **Urgent support is needed to begin planting activities for the main agricultural campaign (May-October 2013)**.
- Aggravated by existing chronic vulnerabilities, the negative effects of the recent crises in 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2012 remain. Vulnerable people have eroded their capacity to withstand external shocks and many continue to be heavily indebted and have been unable to restore their productive means. **Time is of the essence for building resilience** to strengthen the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people.

CURRENT SITUATION IN THE SAHEL REGION

Despite good agricultural production in 2012 and good conditions for pastoralists, the **regional situation in 2013 is still of concern** with a **‘triple crisis’** affecting the Sahel:

- i. Many households are still suffering from the impact of the 2012 food crisis, which was caused by factors such as drought in 2011, persisting high food prices and low agriculture production.
- ii. The underlying chronic nature of food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as deteriorated resilience¹ in the region.
- iii. The ongoing conflict in Mali, and the large population movements it is causing in the region.

The food and nutrition insecurity situation in the Sahel is increasingly complex, multidimensional and driven by widespread poverty, population explosion, chronic vulnerability and weakened resilience. The impacts of recent crises in 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2012 are still constraining the population from rebuilding their livelihoods.

Recurring crises have eroded the coping capacities and weakened the livelihoods of an already vulnerable population, further impoverishing them. The majority of the most vulnerable people had not recovered from one crisis when the next hit, and were unprepared to withstand new shocks, such as erratic rains, low agricultural production, persistently high levels of food prices, national and regional insecurity and the threat of a Desert Locust infestation. Extreme food insecurity was averted in 2012 and the worst crisis was mitigated. Still, an estimated 10.3 million people, including those that could not benefit from adequate or sufficient livelihood support in 2012, will remain food and nutrition insecure and highly vulnerable to external shocks in 2013.

The political, security and human rights situation in the region is rapidly deteriorating as a consequence of the conflict in Mali. It is estimated that there are currently **292 648 IDPs in Mali** and **175 211 refugees** in neighbouring countries, primarily Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger (OCHA 10 April 2013). **The food security situation in northern Mali is alarming**, with severe lack of food. Insecurity, limited access to social services, continued fighting and the mines and unexploded ordinances have severely affected the populations. The humanitarian space is shrinking and reaching people in rural areas, particularly in the north, has become increasingly difficult. Rapid assessments undertaken in areas that are once again under Malian control are showing deteriorating food security conditions. Although domestic United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flights have resumed to Mopti and Kayes, and regular flights to Timbuktu are likely to begin shortly, many supply routes to the north are disrupted, with the exception of the

¹ “Resilience” is, for FAO, the ability to prevent disasters and crises or to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from those that impact nutrition, agriculture, food security and food safety (and related public health risks) in a timely, efficient and sustainable manner. This includes protecting, restoring and improving structures and functions of food and agricultural systems under threat.

newly opened Douentza-Gao road and the Niger river. Food stocks are diminishing, leading to increased prices and limited availability of, and access to, food and agricultural inputs. The closure of the Algerian borders, and increased control at the borders of Burkina Faso, are hindering cross border trade and livestock movements, which are imperative to people's livelihoods and local economic systems.

The living conditions of refugees and their host families remain critical. Mass migrations are causing further stress on communities already affected by recent food and nutrition crises and have created competition over access to basic services. Many refugees are bringing their livestock with them, adding pressure to scarce natural resources (grazing land and water), endangering animals in the region with the possible spread of animal diseases, and increasing conflict between pastoralist refugees and host communities.

FAO interventions in the central regions are currently ongoing through international and local NGOs, and will be increased subject to a humanitarian space being secured. FAO is implementing important livelihood support activities in favour of host communities and vulnerable households affected by the food and nutrition security crisis that are at risk of being neglected since focus has mainly been on people affected by the conflict.

The nutritional status of children under five remains alarming and it is estimated that over 1.4 million children will be at risk of severe acute malnutrition in 2013. In the Niger, the results of the national SMART (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions) nutrition survey, conducted in July-August 2012, indicate that the nutritional status of children under five years is of great concern. Although the chronic malnutrition rate decreased by 9 percent (from 51 percent to 42 percent) compared to June 2011, the global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate increased from 12.3 percent, in June 2011, to 14.8 percent in 2012. The GAM rate is very close to the emergency threshold of 15 percent determined by the World Health Organization (WHO). Four regions are above this emergency threshold: Zinder (15.9 percent), Maradi (16.2 percent), Tillabéri (16.6 percent) and Diffa (16.7 percent). The severe acute malnutrition rate increased from 1.9 percent in June 2011 to 3 percent in 2012 (this rate was at 3.2 percent in 2010, which was considered to be a very difficult year for food and nutrition security). In the Sahel regions of Chad, Mauritania and north Nigeria, a nutrition survey also implemented during the lean season, exhibits concerning rates of high acute malnutrition. Despite good agropastoral production, the nutrition situation will remain a matter of deep concern in 2013, as this does not significantly benefit poor and very poor rural households.

The crop harvest has been positive as rains over the Sahel were good in most of the region during the last rainy period (July-October 2012), leading to water rates and volumes exceeding reference years (1985, 2011 and average 2011/12). However, according to data collected (15 September 2012), more than 1.5 million people were affected by heavy rains across West and Central Africa in July and August 2012. In north Nigeria, flooding resulted in 387 153 additional IDPs as of November 2012 (National Emergency Management Agency). The Regional Consultation on the food and nutrition situation in West Africa and the Sahel (PREGEC, 12-14 March 2013) stated that gross cereal production for the 2012/13 growing season in the Sahel is 22.5 million tonnes, up by 37 percent compared to last year and 34 percent compared to the five-year average. The Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad have recorded cereal surpluses, unlike last year. Senegal and Mauritania recorded a sharp increase in cereal productions (up by 50 percent) compared to last year. However, public and private stocks have yet to be rebuilt to their optimal level owing to their depletion in 2012, the lack of funding and the launch of tenders by cereal boards, still modest in the countries. Poor and very poor rural households, that have limited access to agriculture and that did not benefit from livelihood support during the past season, will continue to depend on markets to access food. These households may not see a significant improvement of their food access and nutritional status in 2013. According to *Afrique Verte*, the off-season campaign has started and sowing has begun with the gradual withdrawal of water in places ideal for market gardening activities, including planting and maintenance of vegetation.

The pastoral situation has improved with adequate land pasture and good water conditions in all of the countries, leaving herds in good physical condition. Insecurity in Mali has led to the migration of pastoralists and their animals, thus adding pressure on the scarce natural resources and creating competition with local communities. The animal health situation is satisfactory, except for a few cases of bovine contagious pleuropneumonia in the Gambia and neighbouring countries, as well as sheep and goat plague.

Food prices remain volatile and high compared with the five-year average. In early February, after the post-harvest food price decreases, coarse grain prices increased in almost all of the markets in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger compared with January. In view of the need to reconstitute household food stocks and cereal offices, prices could fail to drop significantly in 2013 despite good crop production. Although cattle prices remain high, but stable compared to January, the terms of trade livestock/cereal have continued improving in February due to the improved condition of livestock and decreased cereal prices. The July-September rise in international maize, wheat and soya prices (due to atypical drought conditions in the United States) had a limited impact in the Sahel, and in December wheat values changed very little under subdued trade activity. Still, the situation must be closely monitored, particularly in Mauritania in view of its dependence on wheat imports.

The Desert Locust situation in the Sahel has improved dramatically and is currently calm due to successful control operations. However, FAO remains vigilant and continues to support the front-line countries by preparing them to respond effectively if swarms return to the Sahel region from northern Africa in June 2013.

i. FAO Strategic Resilience Framework

FAO is strongly committed to support the Sahel crisis under a programmatic resilience framework, anchored in the FAO pillars of Disaster Risk Management (DRM), serving as an overarching umbrella not only for the humanitarian response, but also for medium to long-term work of the Organization, including investment. It is entitled “Urgent action to support the resilience of vulnerable populations Strategic Response Framework Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel” (last update July 2012). Recognizing the need to break the vicious cycle of recurrent crises and emergencies in the region, the Strategic Framework set out the priorities, not only for humanitarian support, but also for medium to long-term interventions, including investment. The overall objective is *to improve the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations in the Sahel*, in order to strengthen their livelihoods and enable them to withstand and mitigate the impact of future crises.

In line with this vision, the Strategic Framework’s five pillars and expected results are as follows: (1) **protect and strengthen the livelihoods** of vulnerable populations; (2) **govern risks and manage crises**: strengthened national and regional institutional capacities for coordination and management of crises and reduction of food and nutrition insecurity risks; (3) **watch to safeguard**: needs assessment, monitoring and early warning systems (EWS) at local, national and regional levels are strengthened in a concerted and integrated way; (4) **prepare to respond**: contingency plans and crisis preparedness are strengthened at regional, national and local levels; (5) **inform and communicate for knowledge**: knowledge management and dissemination of good practices in risk reduction and strengthening resilience are promoted at all levels. The achievement of the five strategic results is supported by the following three cross-cutting issues: (i) the central role of *capacity development*; (ii) *strategic partnerships* and alliances; (iii) the crucial importance of *gender equality*.

At the regional level, humanitarian actors launched the 2013 Humanitarian Sahel Strategy in December 2012 in Dakar. The Strategy aims to ensure a coordinated and harmonized approach for humanitarian response both at the national and regional level. It includes a shared regional analysis of the context and situation, common regional strategic goals and objectives and agreed performance indicators for delivery and systematic monitoring that provides evidence-based needs and gaps analysis.

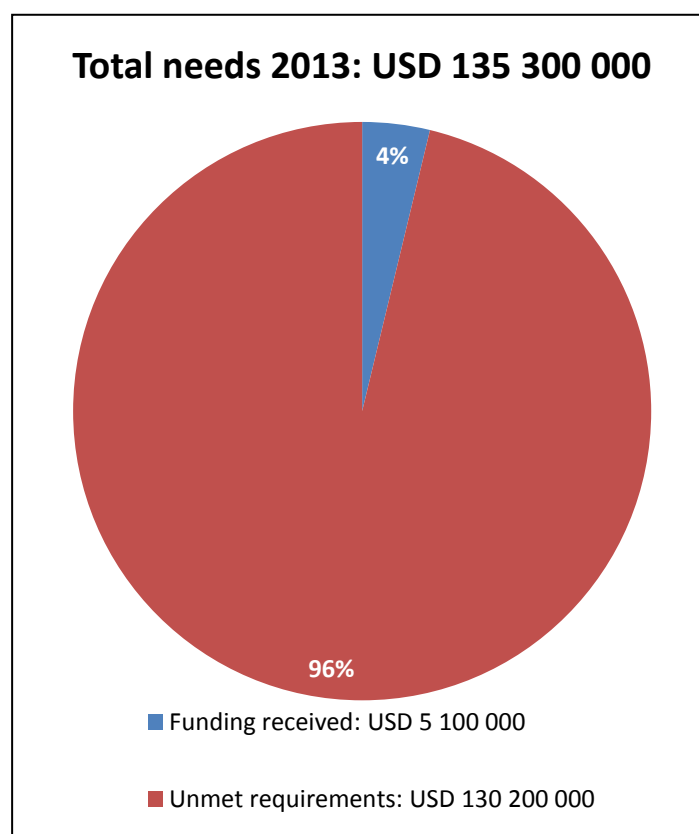
ii. Funding requirements 2013

For 2013, FAO is requesting a total of **USD 135.3 million to improve the food and nutrition security of almost 6 million vulnerable people** in the Sahel. This estimate is based on the current situation, but could be revised depending the evolving regional situation due to the ongoing conflict in Mali. The request includes FAO’s components of:

- **CAP 2013**: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger;
- the **Sahel Regional Strategy 2013**: Senegal, the Gambia, north Cameroon and north Nigeria (non-CAP countries) as well as regional support; and
- estimated **needs in Mali and neighbouring countries** due to the **Malian conflict**, in line with the contingency plan “Mali + ” developed by IASC.

Countries	Beneficiaries forseen	Total requirements 2013 (USD millions)	Received funds 2013 (USD millions)	Unmet requirements (USD millions)
Burkina Faso	1 080 600	22.7	0.9	21.8
North Cameroon	50 800	2.4	0	2.4
Chad	715 800	16.4	0	16.4
The Gambia	158 000	6.2	0	6.2
Mali	840 000	22	3	19
Mauritania	786 000	5.7	0.2	5.5
North Nigeria	40 000	3	1	2
The Niger	1 774 200	48.3	0	48.3
Senegal	483 500	6	0	6
Regional	n/a	2.6	0	2.6
Total	5 928 900	135.3	5.1	130.2

With the contributions received so far, approximately USD 5.1 million (4 percent of the appeal), FAO has been able to initiate livelihood interventions in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and north Nigeria. For more details on the specific country and regional interventions and planned activities, please refer to the document entitled “**The FAO Component of the Sahel 2013 Humanitarian Appeals**” at http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/SahelCAP13.pdf as well as the afore-mentioned [FAO regional strategic framework](#) “**The Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel: Urgent Action to Support the Resilience of Vulnerable Populations - Regional Strategic Response Framework**”.



FAO CAPACITY AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

FAO presence in the Sahel region

FAO is represented in all of the Sahel countries and has the required capacity to implement country and regional interventions. In Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, the Niger and Senegal, FAO Country Offices also include Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Units dealing specifically with activities pertaining to the crisis. In addition, the FAO Subregional Emergency and Rehabilitation Office based in Senegal and the FAO Subregional Office in West Africa based in Ghana, with the support of FAO headquarters, are planning and regionally coordinating the FAO global response to the crisis in the short, medium and longer term, including investment as well as the sharing of best practices throughout the subregion. These offices also contribute, together with key partners, to food and nutrition security information analysis.

Partnerships and coordination mechanisms

In order to carry out its mandate, FAO is closely collaborating and partnering with the host governments and local authorities at all levels, national and research institutions, other United Nations agencies, the donor community and civil society, local associations and international non-governmental organizations.

FAO also participates in national thematic working groups/clusters covering areas such as food and nutrition security, humanitarian and emergency coordination and early warning. The organization often has a prominent, if not lead, coordinating role due to its expertise. In addition, FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) co-lead the Food Security Clusters that are active in Chad, the Niger and Mali. An additional Food Security Cluster is foreseen in Mauritania. In Senegal, FAO and WFP co-lead the Food Security Coordination Group.

In collaboration with the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), WFP and host governments, FAO regularly offers its support and technical expertise to monitoring exercises such as crop assessments, food security and market surveys, vulnerability assessment and targeting evaluations.

Within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)/Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) process, FAO is also supporting the formulation of National Agricultural and Food Security Investment programmes. National Programmes for Food Security (NPFS) have been prepared by each of the Sahel countries, with Mauritania as the most recent to be completed. Two NPFS (Chad and Mali) are under implementation. The NPFS for the Sahel countries require an investment of about USD 1.89 billion.

FAO has supported the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)² in the development of the CAADP Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (PRIA). A thematic programme from PRIA focuses on the reduction of vulnerability to food crises and the promotion of stable and sustainable access to food, estimated at USD 176 million. This programme aims to establish a system of regional emergency humanitarian food reserves. It includes the review and adoption of the Charter for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises, covering West African countries (beyond the Sahel) and actors (beyond states, to include regional organizations and non-state actors). The charter stresses the importance at regional level, to avoid and tackle food crises. FAO also supports ECOWAS, through the Dakar based IASC Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group, to develop its strategy, mechanism and Plan of Action to intervene in humanitarian crises.

INTERVENTIONS IN 2012

In 2012, FAO received USD 49.8 million for emergency and rehabilitation programmes in the Sahel, representing 44 percent of the USD 112 million appeal. An additional USD 8.2 million³ was received for Desert Locust interventions, corresponding to 82 percent of the USD 10 million appeal.

Several donors contributed to FAO's livelihood interventions in the Sahel during 2012, including Belgium, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the European Union's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, Finland, France, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. The FAO Technical Cooperation Programme also contributed to address immediate needs.

With the contributions received (in total **USD 58 million**), FAO was able to support the livelihoods of more than **5.2 million people** affected by the 2012 crisis (including more than 223 000 Malian IDPs, refugees and host families) through the implementation of the following activities:

1. **Support to food crop and off-season production**, including the following activities:
 - a. distribution of agricultural inputs (food crop seeds, fertilizers, small agricultural tools, agricultural material to build fences, etc.), targeting both the main rainy agricultural season (production of cereals such as rice, maize, sorghum, millet, cowpeas, groundnuts) and off-season vegetable production with the introduction of drought resistant vegetable varieties;
 - b. strengthening of the food chain and marketing sector (storage, processing and transportation of agricultural goods); and
 - c. integration of nutrition activities (nutritional education, food preparation and utilization and consumption diversification).
2. **Support to domestic animal protection and production**, including:
 - a. protection of livestock, provision of veterinary multi-vitamins and mineral food complements and vaccination campaigns;
 - b. provision of technical support for livestock management and animal health; and
 - c. restocking of herds through the distribution of vaccinated small ruminants and poultry.
3. **Soil and water conservation and rehabilitation**, focused on the following activities:
 - a. rehabilitation of irrigation systems and water points;
 - b. rehabilitation or construction of pastoral wells; and
 - c. restoration of degraded lands.
4. **Early warning and preparedness support**, focused on:
 - a. strengthening of national EWS;
 - b. support to food insecurity and vulnerability analysis, including technical support to the *Cadre Harmonisé*;
 - c. support to national crop assessments and market analysis; and
 - d. contribution to national and regional contingency plans for the Malian refugees crisis.
5. **Desert Locust control and monitoring**, focused on the following activities:
 - a. strengthening the operational capacity and security measures of the national survey and control teams;
 - b. triangulation of pesticides;
 - c. provision of technical assistance; and
 - a. preparation for scaling-up of interventions.

² The following Sahel countries are members of ECOWAS: Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali, the Niger and Senegal. Cameroon, Chad and Mauritania are not members.

³ This amount includes direct funding to FAO in support of DL interventions in the Sahel as well as bilateral funding granted to recipient countries.

LINKS

- FAO website on the Sahel crisis: <http://www.fao.org/crisis/sahel/the-sahel-crisis/en/>
- FAO Component of the Sahel 2013 Humanitarian Appeals :
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/SahelCAP13.pdf
- FAO's response to the 2012 Sahel crisis: <http://www.fao.org/crisis/sahel/en/>
- FAO and emergencies: <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/>
- FAO Locust Watch website / Sahel threat: <http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/2002/index.html>
- DRM Regional strategy for West Africa and Sahel, 2011-2013 (FAO 2011):
<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/home/news/emergency-news/emergency-detail/en/item/120920/icode/?uidf=1345>
- FAO DRR corporate framework: "Resilient livelihoods: Disaster Risk reduction for food and nutrition" security:
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2540e/i2540e00.pdf>
- Interagency (IASC) Strategy for the Sahel "Preparation for a food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel and neighbouring countries":
<http://ochaonline.un.org/UrgencesEmergencies/Sahel2012/tabid/7773/language/fr-FR/Default.aspx>

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