



Background

Striking between 15 August and 2 September, Hurricanes Fay and Gustav and Tropical Storm Hanna caused escalating devastation and human suffering throughout the ten departments of Haiti. Initial estimates reveal some 800 000 people to be in critical need of assistance and tens of thousands of homes severely damaged or destroyed. With the hurricane season yet to pass, many affected areas remain cut off from initial humanitarian efforts as major roads and bridges have been blocked or demolished.

The force of tropical winds, landslides and severe flooding, reaching 3 metres in Gonaives, caused extensive damage to all sectors and wiped out the scarce asset base of vulnerable communities already affected by chronic food insecurity, malnutrition and the impact of soaring food prices. The rapid succession of storms inundated nearly all agricultural land and coincided with the peak time of growth of summer crops, leaving an entire harvest either damaged or destroyed.



Severe flooding of agricultural land in Port de Paix

The 2008 Haiti Flash Appeal was launched on 10 September and seeks USD 107.7 million to provide immediate and early recovery assistance to victims of Hurricane Gustav and Tropical Storm Hanna. The Appeal will be regularly updated in line with the further assessment of needs and newly arising disasters. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is the lead agency for agriculture and aims to assist Government efforts and the people of Haiti to rehabilitate the sector, enabling the resumption of livelihoods and food production – identified among priority actions under the Appeal.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

Approximately two-thirds of Haiti's population depends on agriculture for its livelihood and for many as a means to meet basic household food requirements. The flooding, landslides and erosion caused by the recent hurricanes have devastated some 900 hectares of standing maize, bean, potato and sweet potato crops and 350 hectares of banana plantations. More than 50 000 farming households require immediate assistance – a number which may soar to 150 000 as the evaluation of damages and needs progresses.

With severe losses to standing crops and food reserves, much importance will fall on the performance of the upcoming planting season, beginning in October, for which farmers lack the seeds and tools necessary to return to their fields. The impairment of major irrigation and drainage systems will require urgent repair to ensure that farmers in irrigated plains can effectively resume crop production. The rehabilitation work would also provide much-needed income to vulnerable families through cash-for-work schemes.

Cattle, goats, pigs and poultry have died by the thousands, devastating the livelihoods of families who depend on livestock raising activities to generate income and as a source of household nutrition. Further, surviving animals are severely weakened and more prone to disease.

Efforts to restore agricultural production and income generation will be paramount to increasing the food security of Haiti's most vulnerable hurricane victims.

FAO in Haiti

Within the framework of the 2008 Haiti Flash Appeal, FAO has requested **USD 10.5 million** to support Government efforts to restore the agricultural production and self-reliance of rural families in Haiti most affected by Hurricanes Gustav and Fay and Tropical Storm Hanna.

FAO activities aim to:

- **rebuild the livelihoods of farmers** through the provision of key farming inputs and small livestock;
- **rehabilitate the irrigation system** by replacing and cleaning damaged or destroyed infrastructure through cash-for-work schemes; and
- **prevent the spread of animal disease and mortality among surviving livestock** through vaccination campaigns and provision of animal feed.

FAO will adjust its activities and funding requirements, in tandem with Appeal revisions, to meet the increasing needs of disaster-affected communities in Haiti as the hurricane season progresses, and in response to further devastation caused by Hurricane Ike on 7 September.





FAO'S COMPONENT OF THE 2008 HAITI FLASH APPEAL

Total funding required: USD 10.5 million



Project title: Rebuild the livelihoods of the farmers most affected by natural disasters in 2008

Objectives: To provide quality inputs and small livestock to farmers hit by the recent emergencies in 2008

Beneficiaries: 15 000 households in mountainous areas, 25 000 households in the irrigated plains and 10 000 households residing by foothills

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development, agriculture sector non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and farmers' associations

Funds Requested: USD 5 000 000

"Rebuild the livelihoods of the farmers most affected by natural disasters in 2008" seeks to restore the food production capacity of families whose livelihoods were lost as a result of the recent hurricanes. FAO's intervention aims to equip a total of 50 000 vulnerable households with the farming inputs and tools they need in order to prepare fields in time for upcoming seasons, beginning as early as October/November, and with small animals to restore backyard livestock production.

With donor support, project activities will contribute to replenishing the productive asset base of rural households, empowering families to resume livelihood activities, increase access to food and generate income. The assistance will avert many families from adopting harmful coping strategies, such as abandonment of their fields, the sale of productive assets and migration.

Project title: Rehabilitation of the irrigation network in the main areas affected by the natural disasters of 2008

Objectives: To ensure access to irrigation water to guarantee agricultural production in the next cropping season

Beneficiaries: 20 000 households in the irrigated plains

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development, agriculture sector NGOs and farmers' associations

Funds Requested: USD 2 000 000

"Rehabilitation of the irrigation network in the main areas affected by the natural disasters of 2008" aims to repair irrigation systems of Artibonite, west, northwest and southeast regions that suffered severe flood damage. Through cash-for-work schemes, the proposed project will primarily focus on cleaning out irrigation canals, drains and key irrigation infrastructure – such as distribution reservoirs, U-bends and pipes – and the reinforcement of riverbanks. The structural rehabilitation work will create much-needed income generation opportunities and provide farmers with access to irrigation water for upcoming agricultural seasons. Activities will directly benefit 20 000 farming households and have a resonant impact on overall food security.

Project title: Emergency assistance to prevent clostridial diseases, classical swine fever and Newcastle disease epidemics

Objectives: To reduce the risk of post-emergency deaths linked to the excess of humidity after the floods

Beneficiaries: 30 000 to 50 000 livestock owners

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development, agriculture sector NGOs and farmers' associations

Funds Requested: USD 3 500 000

"Emergency assistance to prevent clostridial diseases, classical swine fever and Newcastle disease epidemics" endeavours to fight the spread of animal diseases and reduce the risk of post-flood deaths among livestock. With excess humidity in flooded areas and the weakened condition of animals, there is a heightened risk for disease outbreaks.

With donor support, the project aims to vaccinate 1.2 million heads of cattle against clostridial diseases, 1.8 million pigs against swine fever and 3 million poultry against Newcastle disease, in addition to the provision of emergency livestock feed, including roughage and crushed grains. Project activities will decrease animal losses and increase the productivity of surviving livestock.

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