



FAO'S ROLE IN THE 2009 HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION APPEAL FOR NEPAL

16 January 2009

Background

Following a decade of civil conflict (1996-2006), Nepal has undergone extensive political transition. The country was declared a Federal Democratic Republic on 28 May 2008, ending 240 years of monarchy. Against this change and hopes for lasting peace, however, lies extreme vulnerability caused by years of violence, frequent natural disasters and displacement. Eight million Nepalese live in poverty and 40 percent of the population is undernourished. Child malnutrition rates rank among the highest in the world, with nearly one out of two children suffering stunted growth.

In 2008, severe flooding in eastern and western regions affected more than 250 000 people. On 18 August, the Koshi River burst its eastern embankment, inundating four Village Development Committees in Sunsari district. Heavy rains followed from 19 to 21 September, which spread further flood damage to mid- and far-western regions. Some 50 000 people remain displaced.

Soaring food and commodity costs also caused vulnerability to skyrocket in 2008. The number of people in need of food assistance (2.7 million) increased by 1.4 million over the course of the past year. Nepal is a food deficit country despite the fact that agriculture is the primary contributor to economic growth. Recurrent natural disasters and years of conflict have severely jeopardized food production and thus the livelihoods of millions of rural poor.

The 2009 Humanitarian Transition Appeal for Nepal, launched on 19 January, seeks USD 115 million to provide emergency, preparedness and transition support within a 12-month timeframe to assist Nepalese most in need. Based on increased food insecurity and the higher cost of inputs and transport, financial requirements for food- and nutrition-related interventions have risen by 12 percent of overall funding needs as compared with 2008.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

Three-quarters of Nepal's population depends on agriculture for its livelihood – many as subsistence farmers. However, most households only produce enough to meet their basic food needs for three to six months. Livelihoods are continually at risk as Nepal is frequently struck by natural disasters and situated in one of the world's most seismically active zones.

The steep rise in global costs has deepened pockets of poverty. This has exhausted farmers' ability to afford livelihood inputs as well as to buy produce to supplement their food needs. Among the extreme poor, 90 percent of households faced a food shortage this season. Although a large proportion of flood-affected families have returned to their villages, many have not received crop and livestock support packages to recover their livelihoods. Further, displacement has placed strain on the already scarce resources of host communities.



Vegetable seeds provided by FAO to farming households in Mid and Far Western Regions of Nepal

Without support to rehabilitate the agriculture sector, the poorest segments of Nepal's population will plunge further into poverty and malnutrition, particularly women and children. Urgent action is needed to ensure that families dependent on agriculture receive inputs to restart production, generate income and increase their resilience to future shocks.



FAO response

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been working

with Government institutions, farmers and herders in Nepal for over 50 years. As the lead United Nations agency for agriculture, FAO offers technical expertise to strengthen food security, from improving practices in the field, to building capacity at institutional level to better support needs within the sector.

Within the framework of the 2009 Humanitarian Transition Appeal for Nepal, FAO has requested **USD 4.2 million** to improve the food security of households most affected by natural disasters, conflict and global price increases.

With donor funding, FAO's activities will:

- carry out needs assessments to confirm priorities in the crop and livestock sectors;
- supply farmers with quality production assets (seeds, tools, fertilizer) to restore food production;
- deliver veterinary inputs to safeguard the health and productivity of livestock; and
- provide training and technical guidance on improved crop and livestock practices as well as disaster preparedness and mitigation.





FAO'S COMPONENT OF THE 2009 HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION APPEAL FOR NEPAL

Total funding required: USD 4.2 million



Project title: Urgent food security assistance to vulnerable farming families affected by the soaring food prices (NEP-09/A/23607)

Objectives: To improve household food security in the Mid and High Hills Region.

Beneficiaries: 168 000 people (30 000 farming households); including 108 000 children and 30 000 women.

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and international non-governmental organizations.

Project Duration: January – December 2009.

Funds Requested: USD 1 600 000.

“Urgent food security assistance to vulnerable farming families affected by the soaring food prices” seeks to provide agricultural inputs to households most affected by chronic food insecurity and increased food costs in the Mid and High Hills Regions of Nepal. In collaboration with partners, FAO will conduct a detailed needs assessment to confirm priority areas in the crop and livestock sectors. Donor funding will enable high quality production inputs – such seeds, tools, fertilizers and livestock inputs – to reach 30 000 households most in need.

The intervention also aims to provide training and technical support on modern cultivation, harvest, post-harvest and storage techniques, which will enhance production and reduce future losses. At household and community levels, the project will strengthen awareness on livelihood diversification and risk reduction measures.

Project title: Agriculture support for the Koshi floods affected rural households (NEP-09/A/23608)

Objectives: To improve short-term food security among vulnerable populations affected by the Koshi floods.

Beneficiaries: 28 000 people (5 000 farming households), including 18 000 children and 5 000 women.

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and international non-governmental organizations.

Project Duration: January – December 2009.

Funds Requested: USD 1 100 000.

“Agriculture support for the Koshi floods affected rural households” aims to replace lost assets among farming families whose livelihoods were depleted during the August 2008 floods. For many displaced groups, the lack of livelihood support upon their return home severely damaged coping mechanisms. Project activities will provide 5 000 most vulnerable households that have access to land with essential livelihood inputs, including seeds and tools.

In addition to increasing local food production, the project will also work to strengthen awareness on community-based disaster preparedness. Training will be provided on best practices for cultivation and livestock rearing as well as on improved harvest, post-harvest and storage technologies.

Project title: Agriculture and livestock support for the flood-affected rural households in the Mid and Far West Regions (NEP-09/A/23609)

Objectives: To improve short-term food security among vulnerable rural populations affected by the floods.

Beneficiaries: 7 500 farming households

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and international non-governmental organizations.

Project Duration: January – December 2009.

Funds Requested: USD 1 500 000.

“Agriculture and livestock support for the flood-affected rural households in the Mid and Far West Regions” endeavours to enhance the food security of farmers most affected by the September 2008 heavy rains, which affected 180 000 people and their livelihoods. With donor support, the project will deliver much-needed agricultural inputs that will enable families to resume crop production. Herders will benefit from the provision of animal health services and veterinary supplies.

Project efforts will increase crop and livestock production, helping 7 500 households to resume their livelihood activities and generate income. The provision of training and technical support will maximize the use and output of the assets provided, while increasing the use of best practices in beneficiary communities.

For more information please contact:

Ms Bui Thi Lan
FAO Representative for Nepal
PO Box 25, UN House, Puchowk
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: (977) 1 5523200 | Fax: (977) 1 5526258
Email: FAO-NP@fao.org
Website: www.fao.org/emergencies

Ms Hilde Niggemann
Senior Operations Officer
FAO Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome 00153, Italy
Office: +39 (06)570 53286 | Fax: +39 (06)570 54941
Email: Hilde.Niggemann@fao.org
Website: www.fao.org/emergencies

