



FAO's ROLE IN THE 2008 JOINT APPEAL FOR DJIBOUTI

31 July 2008

Background

Despite a strategic coastal location that enables the import and export of goods to land-locked countries in the Horn of Africa, the Republic of Djibouti continues to suffer from widespread unemployment, poverty and social inequalities. Increasing food and energy prices, reduced purchasing powers and the impacts of drought have led to a humanitarian crisis across the country, with large swathes of the population currently unable to feed themselves.

Below average rainfall in 2005, 2006 and 2008 has caused the death of large numbers of livestock and a significant decline in milk production. In addition, local food prices have increased by about 20 percent since 2007. These factors have compounded the widespread poverty and malnutrition already affecting communities in Djibouti, compromising the food security, health and livelihoods of some 120 000 people. Vulnerable communities are under additional pressure from the continuing influx of Somalis and Ethiopians crossing the border in search of asylum. At present, Djibouti is struggling to host at least 30 000 asylum seekers and refugees in the absence of even the most basic materials for shelter and fuel.

The Djibouti Response Plan for Drought, Food and Nutrition Crisis was launched on 31 July 2008 and appealed for a total of USD 31.7 million to support the Government of Djibouti in responding to the food and nutrition crisis aggravated by drought and soaring food prices. 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 Djibouti in resuming livelihoods and food production.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

With only 3 percent of the country's arid terrain suitable for cultivation, pastoralism is the mainstay of the farming economy in Djibouti. Traditionally, most Djiboutians are nomadic pastoralists, but years of adverse climatic conditions and national border restrictions have forced 85 percent of the country's nomadic population to migrate to urban areas.

Even for Djibouti's arid climate, rainfall in recent years has been extremely low and erratic, with devastating impacts for the country's remaining pastoralist communities. Herders have lost between 40 and 70 percent of their animals and struggle to maintain their surviving livestock in the face of poor animal health, degraded pastureland and insufficient water supplies. The drought has also caused a dramatic reduction in ground water levels, while degraded irrigation networks make it difficult to distribute the little water available. The resulting dive in crop production has pushed many farmers into a state of extreme poverty and rendered them unable to acquire the inputs they need.



Child playing in an irrigated cultivation plot established with FAO support

Many pastoral and farming families are turning to the sale of firewood and the production of charcoal in order to survive – unsustainable activities that diminish already limited natural resources. Others are migrating to urban areas in the hope of gaining support from Government institutions and international organizations. The combined impacts of decreased production, unemployment and soaring

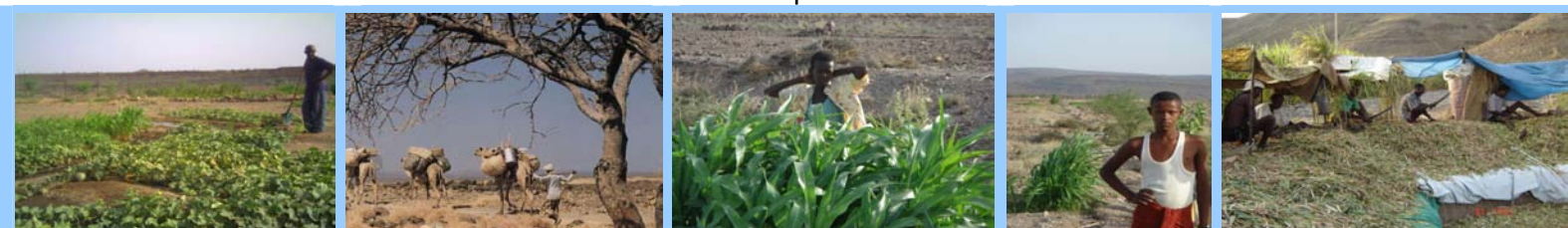
food prices have forced urban and rural households alike to reduce their food intake to only one or two meals a day. Urgent efforts are required to restore agricultural production and boost food security in Djibouti.

FAO response

FAO's emergency and rehabilitation interventions in Djibouti have been assisting the country's most vulnerable communities for the last three years. Within the framework of the 2008 Djibouti Response Plan for Drought, Food and Nutrition Crisis, FAO has requested **USD 6.5 million** to continue supporting Government efforts to restore the food security and self-reliance of vulnerable pastoral and farming families affected by drought and rising food prices.

FAO activities aim to:

- **rebuild pastoral livelihoods** by preventing disease and mortality among surviving livestock, improving animal health and boosting fodder production; and
- **enhance farming livelihoods** by increasing crop production and diversifying incomes.





FAO's COMPONENT OF THE 2008 DJIBOUTI RESPONSE PLAN FOR DROUGHT, FOOD AND NUTRITION CRISIS

Total funding required: USD 6.5 million

Project title: Mitigation response against drought (pastoral component)

Objective: To improve livestock owners' access to quality services and goods to enhance the productivity of their animals.

Beneficiaries: 100 000 pastoralists in drought-affected areas through assistance to 400 000 goats and sheep.

Implementing partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Sea, local communities, NGOs.

Funds requested: USD 4 645 940

Pastoral component

Recurrent droughts have had devastating impacts on the production and trade of livestock in Djibouti. Increasingly scarce supplies of water and fodder have caused animal morbidity rates to reach up to 50 percent in 2008, while surviving livestock are weakened and prone to disease. FAO's proposed project will enable some 100 000 livestock owners across the country to protect their remaining assets by improving the health and productivity of 400 000 animals.

The project will provide pastoralist households with quality animal feed, giving an immediate boost to the health and nutritional status of their livestock. Beneficiaries will also receive training that will equip them to recognize common livestock diseases and administer prophylactic measures to prevent the spread of illness among their herds.

Furthermore, the project will develop rainwater harvesting techniques to improve the availability of fodder and pastureland. Regional markets will be organized under the project to assist herders in selling their animals and improve local infrastructure for livestock trade. Along with the project's capacity-building component, these interventions will enhance the ability of beneficiary families to withstand future shocks and emergencies.



Crop cultivation enables pastoralist families to diversify their incomes

Project title: Mitigation response against drought (agropastoral component)

Objective: To increase food production by promoting agropastoral activities.

Beneficiaries: 50 000 agropastoralists in drought-affected areas. Priority will be given to women, the elderly and children.

Implementing partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Sea, local communities, NGOs.

Funds requested: USD 1 833 330

Agropastoral component

Repeated years of below-average rainfall have caused a significant reduction in ground water levels and most wells in farming areas are operating with a minimal water supply. Degraded irrigation systems further hinder the distribution of water to cultivation plots. Extremely low production has followed, eroding incomes to the point where farmers are unable to purchase the inputs they need. This project aims to assist vulnerable families by boosting fodder, fruit and vegetable production in drought-affected areas of Djibouti.

Building on the success of previous projects in Djibouti, FAO plans to distribute seed and tools to local agricultural cooperatives and develop 50 hectares of small agropastoral plots. The plots will be located around water points equipped with solar energy, in order to limit the negative impacts of future droughts. Beneficiaries will also receive training to enable them to achieve the best possible results with the inputs provided.

Project outcomes will include increased availability of fodder, leading to enhanced nutrition of livestock, and improved nutritional status of beneficiaries thanks to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. With more diversified incomes, agropastoralist households will also be better equipped to deal with future periods of drought and other challenges.

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