



FAO'S ROLE IN THE TAJIKISTAN COMPOUND CRISES FLASH APPEAL 2008

Background

The severe cold wave and related energy crisis in Tajikistan is compounding acute levels of underlying poverty and human suffering resulting from a combination of natural, economic and social shocks. Atypical snowfall, which registered 245 percent above the national average for December, and freezing temperatures have caused extensive damage to water and electrical supply systems, leaving urban areas with as little as two hours of electricity per day and many rural areas with none.

The poorest country of Central Asia, Tajikistan also has the highest rate of female-headed households as a result of labour migration, exacerbating the hardships of disproportionate poverty and discrimination faced by Tajik women.

Living conditions and nutrition have steadily plummeted over the past months. Recent assessments reveal that food and fuel supplies are nearly exhausted in rural areas. The risk for many families to fall into long-term destitution has increased as they are forced to sell productive assets in order to feed their families. In numerous areas, families have reported to consume only one meal per day.

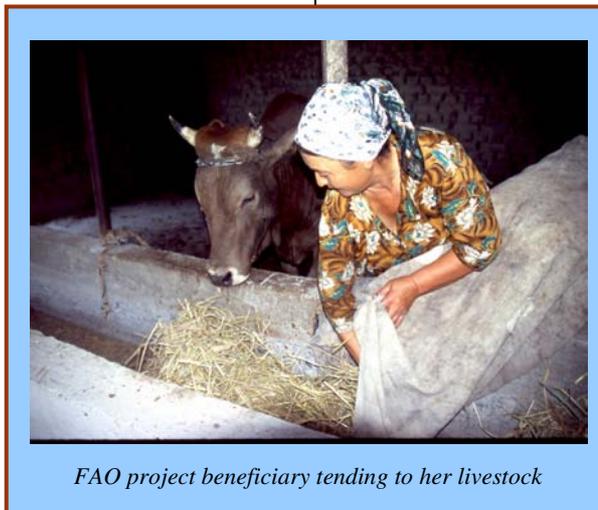
As a result of this and past interlocking crises, an estimated 2 million people are in urgent need of assistance. The Tajikistan Compound Crises Flash Appeal 2008 has outlined strategic priorities for the country that, alongside Government efforts, aim to address immediate live-saving needs and reduce likely and preventable life-threatening situations evolving from the crisis, including potential flooding during spring and related damage.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

Over two-thirds of Tajikistan's population derives its livelihood from agriculture. The country is prone to numerous natural disasters on a yearly basis – such as earthquakes, floods, avalanches, and drought – which continually jeopardize the food production levels, purchasing power and food security of the country's rural, and often most vulnerable, communities. Many families have yet to recover from agricultural production losses

caused by natural disasters in 2006 and 2007, coupled with marked increases in the cost of food and other basic needs.

In 2006, 27 percent of children in Tajikistan suffered chronic malnourishment and stunted growth, in addition to 17 percent reported to be underweight. The current crisis is likely to worsen nutrition indicators, increasing malnutrition and morbidity rates particularly among children, women, the elderly and other vulnerable groups.



FAO project beneficiary tending to her livestock

Freezing temperatures are causing severe damage to agriculture, livestock and fisheries production assets. The loss of crops and seeds for winter cultivation has triggered seasonal unemployment among landless farmers. Also, the lack of fodder is deteriorating the health and productivity of livestock. With agriculture as a sustainable means to improve household food security and nutrition, rehabilitation of the sector will be key to strengthening the capacity of rural populations to recover from past, present and future shocks.

FAO in Tajikistan

Through the provision of training and essential inputs, such as quality seeds, agricultural tools, veterinary supplies and fisheries equipment, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has helped thousands of families in Tajikistan to increase their self-reliance and improve their nutritional intake, while boosting local rural economies and sustainable access to food.

Within the framework of the Tajikistan Compound Crises Flash Appeal 2008, FAO's main objectives are to:

- **improve sustainable food and nutrition security** through increased local food production;
- **protect livelihoods and enhance productivity** through the provision of time-critical inputs to farming and pastoral households; and
- **increase self-reliance among families most at risk** through increasing household-level food production activities targeting people most in need.

As part of the Tajikistan Flash Appeal 2008, FAO is appealing for **US\$5 million**.



FAO'S COMPONENT OF THE TAJIKISTAN COMPOUND CRISES FLASH APPEAL 2008

Project Title: Emergency supply of animal feed to weather-affected livestock farmers in Tajikistan

Objectives: Provide time-critical livestock-related inputs to the poorest livestock farmers and female-headed households to support their immediate food security as well as to recover their production losses and livelihoods

Beneficiaries: 25 000 most vulnerable households (175 000 persons)

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture, FAO and NGOs

Project Duration: six months

Funds Requested: US\$3 000 000

FAO's proposed project, "**Emergency supply of animal feed to weather-affected livestock farmers in Tajikistan**", aims to provide time-critical livestock-related inputs to 25 000 vulnerable pastoralist and female-headed households to support their immediate food security and recover their production losses and livelihoods.

The project seeks to provide livestock feed, medicines and essential vitamins to the poorest livestock farmers affected by the ongoing weather crisis. Project assistance will provide emergency support to protect productive assets, promote immediate food security and ensure the restoration of sustainable livelihoods that depend on livestock production. Such inputs are essential to prevent negative coping strategies as well as permanent destitution.

With donor support, FAO's assistance will equip 25 000 households (175 000 people) with the means to secure their livestock production and immediate livelihood opportunities. These families will also benefit from improved nutrition as a result of increased milk and meat consumption.

The project will dedicate special focus to female-headed households, which are on the rise as a result of labour migration. In addition to increasing food availability at the household level during this critical time, project efforts will provide families with a sustainable means to improve their income and reduce vulnerability to future shocks.

Project Title: Emergency provision of agricultural inputs for the rural areas in the Khatlon Region

Objectives: Enhance the food security and nutritional status of vulnerable families through the provision of agricultural production inputs for household-level agricultural production; these inputs are essential to be provided now for spring planting to ensure harvest in the mid-summer and autumn period

Beneficiaries: 20 000 most vulnerable households

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture, FAO and NGOs

Project Duration: six months

Funds Requested: US\$2 000 000

"**Emergency provision of agricultural inputs for the rural areas in the Khatlon Region**" seeks to assist 20 000 rural families to enhance household-level crop production. The timely provision of agricultural inputs will enable the most vulnerable families of Khatlon Region to plant crops in time for the next harvest, during mid-summer and autumn.

Specifically, the project aims to distribute essential agricultural inputs, including potato and fodder crop seed and fertilizers, to families most in need. Rapid needs assessments are being carried out to ensure that project efforts are directed to the most vulnerable groups of the region. Priority attention will be dedicated to female-headed households.

FAO will share its technical expertise in the agriculture sector through conducting training and workshops on potato and fodder production and crop disease prevention, thereby maximizing the impact of the inputs provided. The project will also distribute information on improved agricultural practices.

Under the food security cluster of the Appeal, the above activities are deemed key to ensuring the early access of beneficiaries to crops and increasing household food security. By building the production capacity and self-reliance of vulnerable communities, the project will also contribute to reducing dependency on food aid as well as the risk of adopting harmful coping strategies.

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