



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**



FAO in Ethiopia

El Niño Response Plan 2016

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FOREWORD

The effects of drought are devastating. Destabilizing and debilitating food production systems, prolonged lack of rain causes widespread hunger, huge economic losses and long-term environmental damage. This year, Ethiopia has faced one of the worst droughts in its history. Driven by the ongoing El Niño, the consecutive failure of two rainy seasons has had profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of millions, especially impacting rural households engaged in the agriculture sector. The threat of El Niño-induced flooding is expected to have an equally destructive effect.

Many have been forced to sell their production assets and abandon their livelihoods. Below-average harvests and crop failures have severely diminished the incomes of farming households, and families dependent on their animals have seen alarming rates of livestock mortality and extreme emaciation due to insufficient pasture and feed. Without stable sources of food and income, households reliant on agriculture are at risk of enhanced food insecurity and malnutrition.

Working closely with the Government, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has contributed to improvements in food security in Ethiopia in recent years. Despite these efforts, the country still faces high levels of vulnerability. An estimated 10.2 million people are now food insecure in Ethiopia – as the drought continues, this number is expected to increase exponentially in the coming months.

The outlook for the upcoming agricultural seasons is not positive, and huge effort is needed to respond to the most urgent needs of affected households and enhance their resilience to future shocks. Laying the framework for short- and longer-term recovery will require targeted and dedicated assistance.

In 2016, FAO Ethiopia seeks USD 50 million to assist 1.8 million pastoralists, agropastoralists and smallholder farmers affected by El Niño. With timely and coordinated support, we can assist vulnerable families to restore agricultural production, regain their livelihoods and better withstand future crises.

Amadou Allahoury
FAO Representative in Ethiopia

SITUATION AND IMPACT

Food insecurity is an enduring, critical challenge in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The Government has dedicated considerable efforts to tackling this challenge, which is reflected by its strong political commitment to development strategies and massive food security programmes. Despite this, repeated exposure to a wide range of hazards – especially drought and floods – has rendered the country increasingly vulnerable to climatic shocks. The agriculture sector is especially impacted by compounding risks, including livestock and crop pests and diseases, conflict, degradation of natural resources, rapid population growth, scarce diffusion of irrigation and watershed management practices, and inadequate use of improved agricultural technology. Given the importance of the agriculture sector in the national economy and livelihoods of the rural poor – agriculture supports half of gross domestic product and 80 percent of total employment – any climatic shock would have a significant impact on the population of Ethiopia.

The current El Niño is one of the strongest on record. Several pastoral areas have recorded significant rainfall deficits – up to 50 percent below average. The most extreme drought conditions are in the northern regional states, which experienced two consecutive poor rainy seasons – *belg* (February to May) and *kiremt* (June to September). The delayed and erratic *kiremt* rains, which feed the main agricultural season (*meher*) that provides up to 85 percent of Ethiopia's food supply, led to crop failures, severe fodder shortages and diminished water access that has resulted in severe emaciation and unusual livestock deaths. Vulnerable rural households have been especially impacted.

El Niño-induced drought conditions have led to a sharp deterioration in food security – in August, the estimated number of food insecure people was 4.5 million, and by the end of the year this figure had more than doubled. According to a Government-led multi-agency *belg* and pre-*meher* assessment, 10.2 million Ethiopians are considered to be food insecure. The recently released Humanitarian Requirements Document for Ethiopia will target this population with life and livelihood-saving support in 2016.

An additional 2 million people have been identified as in need of livestock and seed support by the 2016 Humanitarian Requirements Document. Agricultural and pastoral production has dropped by 50 to 90 percent in some regions, and failed completely in eastern areas. Several hundreds of thousands of livestock have died in Afar Region, and many more in Somali Region (especially in Siti Zone), leading to substantial losses in production. As a result, malnutrition rates have spiked – in August, severe acute malnutrition admissions of children reached the highest amount ever reported (including during the 2011 Horn of Africa crisis).

Massive income loss and indebtedness owing to agricultural losses have heavily impacted the livelihood security of farmers, pastoralists and agriculture-sector wage labourers, severely diminishing their purchasing power. Markets have been destabilized, with sharp price increases for staple crops owing to limited availability, and declining prices for livestock due to high destocking rates. Terms of trade for bartering have also decreased – in some cases, households have been able to purchase less than half the grain from the sale of an animal compared with the same month in 2014. During such crises, financial (especially traditional) services become seriously disrupted and unable to support the rapid recovery of affected populations.

The outlook for 2016 is grim. The effects of El Niño threaten the livelihoods of pastoralists, agropastoralists and smallholder farmers and the food security of millions of Ethiopians. Continued drought through the lean season will contribute to decreasing availability of and access to food – especially as prices rise, food stores deplete and livestock body conditions worsen. Means of production for the next agricultural season are extremely limited as seed reserves have been exhausted and remaining livestock sold. The expected flooding caused by El Niño in southern areas of the country further threatens crop production capacity and livestock health. Increased animal disease outbreaks, including zoonoses and food-borne diseases, pose huge economic and public health risks. Damage to already weak infrastructure by floodwaters has the potential to severely reduce critical water access for farmers and pastoralists.

FAO ETHIOPIA EL NIÑO RESPONSE PLAN 2016



FAO in Ethiopia requires
USD 50 million



to assist
1.8 million people¹



131 500 households through agricultural production support



293 900 households through livestock interventions



30 700 households through resilience-building initiatives

To address the consequences of the global phenomenon of El Niño, FAO is moving forward on the development of response plans for emergency interventions, recovery and resilience building. Including Ethiopia, 20 countries (in Africa, the South Pacific, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean) are being targeted as high priority, with a further 21 countries being monitored closely.

In Ethiopia, the El Niño crisis is first and foremost a livelihoods crisis. The drought has had a profound impact on the livelihoods of agriculture- and livestock-dependent households, causing thousands to rely on food aid. In the coming year, expected flooding is likely to further exacerbate their critical situation. To safeguard agriculture-based livelihoods, an immediate solution must be put in place to restore food production and income generation.

The FAO Ethiopia El Niño Response Plan aims to assist 1.8 million vulnerable pastoralists, agropastoralists and smallholder farmers in 2016. To achieve this, FAO will prioritize agricultural production support in order to reduce the food gap, livestock interventions to protect the livelihood assets of pastoralists and agropastoralists, and activities to enhance the resilience of affected communities through coordinated response.

The one-year Response Plan was developed to provide flexibility to be modified to respond to the evolving needs of targeted populations. By protecting livelihood assets and supporting production, FAO's proposed response aims to reduce the impacts incurred by El Niño-driven drought and floods, and strengthen the ability of households to cope with future shocks.

Covering the most immediate needs of affected households and means for sustainable recovery, this FAO Response Plan supports an integrated approach that also calls for interagency harmonization and partnership. The plan is in line with the Humanitarian Requirements Document for Ethiopia and that of the national Disaster Risk Management – Agricultural Task Force (DRM–ATF), as well as the global FAO El Niño Response Plan 2015/16 and Road Map.

Without timely and adequate humanitarian assistance, the already dire situation will worsen for communities across Ethiopia as the availability of and access to food decreases. If response is insufficient or delayed, recovery will remain difficult, and the costs of action will increase.

¹ N.B.: The actual total of targeted households is an estimated to 360 000 households (i.e. 1.8 million people), as some households may receive assistance under more than one activity.

OVERVIEW: FAO ETHIOPIA EL NIÑO RESPONSE PLAN 2016



Reduce the food gap and enhance nutrition through support to agricultural production

131 500 households

- Emergency seed distribution to affected areas for the *meher* season
- Quality drought-resilient seed production at community level
- Reduce risk of malnutrition through backyard vegetable production initiatives
- Rapid response for irrigated food production at household level



Safeguard livestock-based livelihoods

293 900 households

- Provision of cash to destock already weak animals through slaughter
- Protection of core breeding animals through survival feed provision
- Voucher-based supplementary feed support
- Increase fodder production at community level
- Support to animal health interventions and vector control
- Restore livelihoods through restocking with small ruminants



Enhance resilience of households affected by El Niño

30 700 households

- Adoption of the *caisses de résilience* approach for better mitigation of future crises
- Cash-for-work initiatives to improve critical infrastructure for water access



Coordination for efficient and effective response

- Strengthening emergency coordination for overall response
- Specific food security and agriculture sector assessments, evaluations and analyses
- Dialogue with Government and private sector for efficient response to the crisis



Reduce the food gap and enhance nutrition through support to agricultural production

El Niño-driven drought in Ethiopia has resulted in significant crop losses. Below-average and failed harvests were recorded in large areas of Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNP) Regions. See Annex II for an analysis of rainfall deviations from long-term patterns in Ethiopia from March to August 2015.

As a result of extremely low production, households dependent on crop and vegetable production have lost their main source of income and food, as well their ability to plant during the next agricultural season. To reduce the current and impending food gap and mitigate the risk of malnutrition, FAO plans to assist 131 500 smallholder farming households² through agricultural input provision, seed production support, backyard vegetable production, and irrigation for the *meher* season.

(i) Emergency seed distribution to affected areas for the *meher* season

Two failed agricultural seasons have greatly reduced the availability of seeds as households attempted to plant their fields two to three times in the hope that the *belg* and *kiremt* rains would return. Repeated planting and crop failures have devastated households' seed reserves and purchasing capacity.

Following the release of the Humanitarian Requirements Document, in early January more accurate estimates were released by the DRM-ATF found that nearly 838 000 households required seeds for the upcoming planting seasons as a result of El Niño – a 50 percent increase in identified seed requirements over the span of just one month. As the situation worsens and information becomes more available, these latest estimates from FAO and the Government indicate drastic increases not only in needs, but also in response gaps. About 268 000 households remain untargeted with current funding. Furthermore, these figures reflect only the most urgent needs – those affected by El Niño – and do not include the many households that are otherwise seed insecure.

ESTIMATED SEED REQUIREMENTS BY REGION AND CURRENT TARGETED RESPONSE ³ (as of 8 January 2016)					
Region	Households requiring seeds		Households targeted with seed support		Gap***
	Identified in the HRD (December 2015)	Identified in the DRM-ATF Road Map (January 2016)	NGO-led response target*	Government-led response target**	
Afar	600	1 226	250	613	363
Amhara	150 082	145 448	334	72 724	72 390
Dire Dawa	479	957	0	479	478
Oromia	175 810	313 092	149 826	156 546	6 720
SNNP	26 809	30 470	368	15 235	14 867
Somali	19 200	94 502	334	47 251	46 917
Tigray	104 192	252 280	0	126 140	126 140
Total	477 171	837 975	151 112	418 988	267 875

*Intended response targets with secured funding as reported by NGOs up to 8 January 2016

**Current intended maximum response targets (depending on funding available)

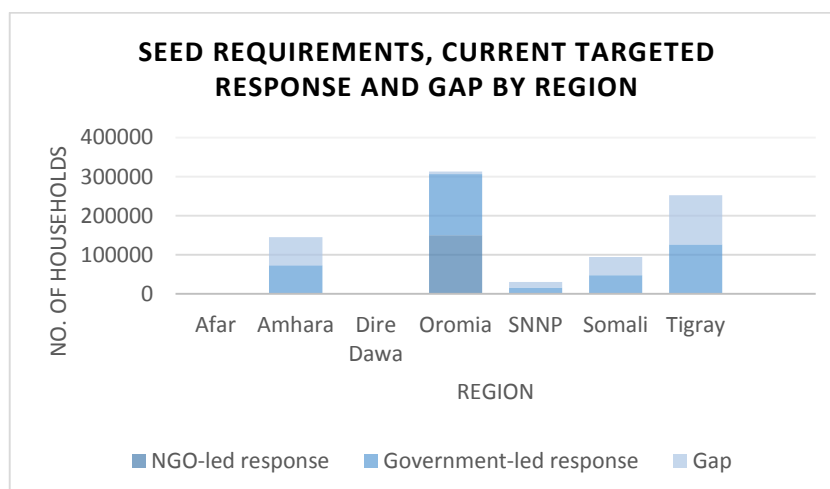
***Minimum number of households requiring seeds not covered by currently funded responses

To restore crop production, it is critical to implement a seed-based intervention to enhance food security and reduce the dependency of smallholder farmers on external food assistance. In Ethiopia, seed distributions have typically been implemented by Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Government, with coordination and quality control led by FAO and following FAO-developed emergency seed system guidelines. However, in light of soaring needs that threaten to overstretch the capacities of these actors, discussions among Government and NGO stakeholders have affirmed the need for FAO to

² Targeted households may benefit under more than one intervention under the Response Plan.

³ Source of figures: Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

address the needs of the most-affected *woredas* not presently covered by Government or NGO response plans. Based on this consensus, FAO will therefore target 100 000 households with short-cycle crop and vegetable seeds to enable households to plant in time for the forthcoming *meher* season.



Due to the unprecedented scale of the El Niño event, only the areas that are most affected by drought will be targeted for the *meher* cropping season. Under this intervention, FAO is targeting about 10 percent of the estimated households requiring seed support. Vulnerable beneficiary households with access to irrigated lands will be provided with seeds and agricultural tools to contribute to meeting their food and nutrition needs, and potentially provide additional income through the sale of surplus production. The intervention will further include training, strict monitoring of beneficiary selection, and technical support.

Target: 100 000 smallholder farming households

Implementation: January to July

Activities:

- Procure and distribute vegetable and short-cycle crop seeds and agricultural tools to 100 000 vulnerable households in drought-affected areas of Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali and Tigray Regions.
- Provide training on agricultural best practices to targeted beneficiaries.

(ii) Quality drought-resilient seed production at community level

The crop failures caused by El Niño-induced drought not only affected smallholder farmers, but also seed producers. However, even before the drought, seed producers in Ethiopia were unable to meet the national demand for seed. The Central Statistics Agency reported that Government-managed federal and regional seed enterprises are responsible for the production of between 20 000 and 30 000 tonnes of seed annually – meeting less than 4 percent of total needs (over 700 000 tonnes). The informal sector produces the most seed in the country, though its quality varies widely. Ethiopia’s seed testing laboratory network is limited; laboratories face labour constraints, high turnover of staff, lack of proper equipment and budget shortages. Access to locally preferred varieties is also a challenge, as studies carried out by FAO Ethiopia confirm there is a high and yet unmet demand for open- and self-pollinated crop seeds, as well as drought-tolerant varieties.

To respond to chronic seed deficits and meet quality standards, it is essential to address value chain bottlenecks. Engaging smallholder farmers in seed multiplication with necessary capacity building has great potential to improve the access of farming households to preferred crop seed varieties. FAO will therefore support community farmers to produce drought-resilient varieties of preferred basic crop seed for the 2016/17 cropping season. Using the farmer field school approach, the skill sets of targeted beneficiaries will be improved through training, enabling sustainable local seed multiplication. Quality

control of the produced seed will be supported through timely inspection and testing services to meet standards and enable farmers to market their seeds.

Target: 10 000 smallholder farming households

Implementation: May to August

Activities:

- Conduct surveys to gauge local seed preferences prior to initiating seed production activities.
- Support 10 000 smallholder farming households to produce up to 100 000 *quintals* of quality seeds by the end of 2016.
- Through farmer field schools, train targeted beneficiaries on good seed multiplication practices.
- Ensure the seeds produced meet quality standards through timely inspection and testing services.
- Support market linkages for seed producers.

(iii) [Reduce risk of malnutrition through backyard vegetable production initiatives](#)

Limited availability of and access to food – especially fresh, nutrition-rich foods – has escalated malnutrition rates, particularly among children and pregnant and lactating women. Severe acute malnutrition can have devastating and long-lasting effects on health, including stunting and physical and mental development delays among children.

To reduce the risk of heightened rates and severity of malnutrition in Ethiopia and enhance self-reliance among affected and vulnerable households, an integrated intervention specifically targeting women is critical. Under this output, FAO will draw from lessons learned and its collaborative experience with an ongoing joint project with the United Nations Children’s Fund aiming to treat and prevent malnutrition. Under this initiative, FAO will target pregnant and lactating women to participate in a comprehensive approach to grow nutritious vegetables. Groups will be formed involving 20 to 25 women, which will be linked to farmer field schools to receive training on backyard vegetable production and nutrition. The groups will further be provided with kits, including micro-irrigation systems and vegetable seeds. To help the beneficiaries meet their immediate needs, a system for granting small loans will be established.

Target: 13 500 female-headed households

Implementation: January to December

Activities:

- Create awareness and sensitize vulnerable communities and collaborate with United Nations (UN) agencies and NGOs.
- Provide micro-irrigation kits and early-maturing vegetable seeds to 13 500 female-headed households.
- Through the farmer field school approach, provide groups skills on good agronomic practices and promote biofortification for the production of nutrition-dense foods.
- Promote proper post-harvest handling and preservation of produce using hygienic methods.
- Support diet diversification through proper food preparation methods.

(iv) [Rapid response for irrigated food production at household level](#)

The ongoing drought has depleted water availability for food production, threatening rainfed agricultural systems and productivity, and negatively impacting food security and nutrition. Efficient water management is necessary to complement rainfed agriculture in order to ensure sustained crop and vegetable production.

To improve the availability of, access to and control over water resources for year-round food production, FAO plans to strengthen irrigation and water management for sustainable small-scale vegetable production. The activity will focus on the implementation of micro-irrigation schemes, supporting households to utilize available underground or surface water resources for irrigation through the use of micro-irrigation kits. The provided kits and vegetable seeds will allow them to

produce up to two harvests a year. Beneficiary households will additionally be provided training on improved water management, good agronomic practices and post-harvest handling. The intervention will reduce the amount of water and labour required to produce crops, enhancing food security and potentially increasing households' income through the sale of surplus – as well as increase incentives for smallholder farming households to stay on their land in the longer term.

Target: 8 000 households

Implementation: January to December

Activities:

- Target 8 000 households to increase their irrigated land by a minimum of 50 m².
- Distribution of adapted micro-irrigation kits (type [20, 50 or 100 m²] varying depending on space available, needs and management capacity) and vegetable seeds to enhance nutrition.
- Training to enhance the skills of beneficiaries and extension agents in improved irrigation techniques, agricultural best practices and post-harvest handling.



Safeguard livestock-based livelihoods

Drought induced by El Niño has had a devastating effect on communities that depend on livestock for their livelihoods. Especially affecting pastoral areas of northern and eastern Ethiopia, water sources have been depleted and pasture has dried up. Massive water and feed shortages have caused livestock body conditions to deteriorate and mortality rates exponentially increase. Recent studies indicate that several hundreds of thousands of livestock have died in Ethiopia due to the effects of El Niño.

Many pastoralists and agropastoralists have been forced to sell their remaining productive assets, and are facing diminishing returns as the market is flooded with weak animals. Without stable income or source of nutritious food, these households are threatened by increased levels of food security and malnutrition. If livestock are not protected, not only will pastoralists be impacted, but also farming households who depend on draught animals for agricultural production. To safeguard the livelihoods of livestock-dependent households, FAO plans to assist 293 900 households⁴ through the protection of core breeding stock through support to fodder production and feed provision. In order to minimize pressures on the limited grazing lands and animal feed available, herd sizes should be rapidly reduced through destocking. FAO further plans to conduct animal health interventions and restock households with small ruminants.

(i) Provision of cash to destock already weak animals through slaughter

As the drought continues, access to water and fodder is dwindling, causing livestock body conditions to worsen and mortalities increase. Many cash-strapped households have sold their remaining livestock, which has driven down prices and thereby diminished households' ability to cope with the disaster – as well as reinforced the poverty impacts of the El Niño-induced drought. As fodder reserves run down, there is urgent need to protect core livestock assets and reduce pressure on limited livestock feed. By destocking and focusing efforts on productive animals, particularly oxen (critically important to ploughing fields and therefore the success of crop production), households are more likely to be able to maintain their livelihoods and retain their assets through the lean season.

To protect core breeding livestock, including pregnant, lactating and dry productive females, FAO plans to support commercial destocking and the provision of cash to destock already weak animals through slaughter. To scale up initiatives being implemented by Mercy Corps, FAO will link traders with livestock owners for the sale of healthy livestock not among their core breeding stock. To further reduce pressure on feed reserves and allow households to preserve their source of livelihood, weak animals will be identified and selected for hygienic slaughter. The sale of weak animals will provide households with income which otherwise would have been lost, limiting risks of indebtedness and potentially allowing pastoralists to restock once the situation improves. Specific targeting will enable households in affected areas to benefit from nutrient-rich meat from livestock that would otherwise die, thereby addressing immediate household food and nutrition needs. The intervention is expected to help offset current livestock mortality trends.

Target: 33 500 households

Implementation: January to August (potentially May pending arrival of *belg* rains)⁵

Activities:

- Identify and select beneficiary households, their core breeding stock and weak animals.
- Destocking 10 000 heads of cattle and 45 000 small ruminants belonging to 33 500 households in Siti Zone, Somali Region and areas of Afar Region.

⁴ Targeted households may benefit under more than one intervention under the Response Plan.

⁵ In *belg*-receiving areas, the intervention will be conducted through to the end of the expected *belg* rains. In non-*belg* areas, the intervention will be carried out through to the end of the expected *kiremt* rains.

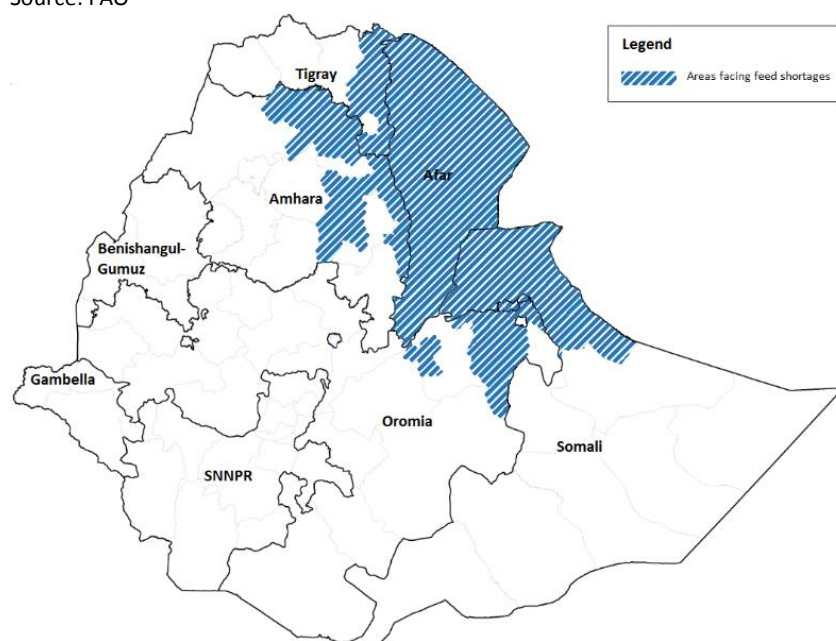
- Distribution of 150 000 one-week meat rations from the slaughtered animals to 30 000 vulnerable beneficiary households in the affected areas.
- Ensure slaughter destocking guidelines issued by the federal DRM–ATF in October 2015 are followed, as well as quality and food safety at *woreda* and *kebele* levels through meat inspection committees.

(ii) Protection of core breeding animals through survival feed provision

Regular access to quality livestock feed remains the greatest threat to the livestock sector in Ethiopia. Even with normal weather conditions, the quality and quantity of feed supplies undergo wide seasonal fluctuations across all agro-ecological zones and production systems. The situation worsens with the occurrence of climatic shocks (i.e. droughts and floods). Insufficient quality livestock feed leads to slow growth, poor reproduction, low milk production and draught power outputs, and in worst-case scenarios, massive livestock mortalities. The current El Niño crisis has threatened the health and lives of millions of livestock, as well as the livelihoods of their owners.

AREAS FACING LIVESTOCK FEED SHORTAGES

Source: FAO



ESTIMATED LIVESTOCK FEED REQUIREMENTS BY REGION ⁶ (as of 8 January 2016)					
Region	Requirements identified in the HRD (by household)	Revised requirements identified by the Government			
		Beneficiary households	Total number of animals	Roughage requirements for three months (tonnes)	
Afar	117 321	118 178	2 004 299	390 236	
Amhara	90 962	296 205	766 603	174 330	
Oromia	91 701	152 515	394 721	89 462	
SNNP	-	51 935	134 412	30 566	
Somali	17 725	7 925	134 408	26 169	
Tigray	181 226	242 123	626 721	142 500	
Total	498 935	868 881	4 061 164	853 262	

⁶ Source of figures: Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries.

In response, FAO plans to provide survival feed to pastoralist and agropastoralist households in affected areas to protect pregnant, lactating and dry productive female animals. Target beneficiary households will be provided roughage (hay and crop residues) procured from farmers in neighbouring areas, thereby supporting the local economy. The roughage will be complemented with molasses and bagasse procured in collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries. In addition to preserving livestock-based livelihoods, increased access to quality feed will enhance and sustain milk production through to the next cycle of fodder production. Ensuring the availability of animal protein is especially important for children to protect against malnutrition through the lean season.

Target: 14 400 households

Implementation: January to August (potentially May pending arrival of *belg* rains)

Activities:

- Conduct awareness raising and sensitization for target beneficiaries and select core breeding stock from their herds.
- Procure hay and crop residues from farmers in neighbouring areas and collaborate with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to procure sugar byproducts (molasses and bagasse).
- Distribute survival feed to 10 000 households in Afar Region and 4 400 households in Somali Region.

(iii) [Voucher-based supplementary feed support](#)

Even before the current drought, a number of pastoralists in Ethiopia have had to abandon herding as their main source of livelihood due to various factors. Many have gained employment with cooperatives that manufacture and marketing of supplementary livestock feed. Having gained skills and have a stable source of income through the cooperatives, they supply multinutrient blocks to humanitarian and development organizations and the federal and regional Government.

To enhance income generation and increase availability of nutritious feed supplements for livestock, FAO intends to establish an additional multinutrient block manufacturing cooperative to serve communities in Somali Region. The cooperative will be equipped with the basic facilities and inputs necessary, and cooperative members will receive training. To link drought-affected livestock-keeping households to this and neighbouring cooperatives, FAO will introduce a voucher system to distribute multinutrient blocks at no additional cost to beneficiaries. The initiative will therefore not only support former pastoralists to gain new marketable skills and increase their income, but also enhance the livelihood security of vulnerable livestock-dependent households through increased access to survival feed. Enhanced nutritious feed has the potential to help resume milk production and thereby contribute to alleviating widespread malnutrition among children and lactating and pregnant women.

Target: 6 000 households

Implementation: January to December

Activities:

- Establish one new multinutrient block manufacturing cooperative in Erer *woreda*, Somali Region and equip it with basic facilities and inputs to start immediate production.
- Conduct awareness raising and sensitization for target pastoral and agropastoral beneficiaries on the benefits and proper use of multinutrient blocks as supplementary survival feed.
- Identify pastoral and agropastoral households most affected by drought and select their core breeding stock, and distribute vouchers for multinutrient blocks produced by the Erer *woreda* cooperative.
- Monitor the quality of the blocks at cooperative and/or beneficiary household level.

(iv) [Increase fodder production at community level](#)

The sustainable recovery and enhanced productivity of Ethiopia's livestock sector following the 2015 drought greatly depends on the sustainable availability of adequate and quality feed. The lean season and ongoing drought will further dry up pasture and water supplies, likely leading to an exhaustion

of the country's fodder reserves. If assistance is not provided, households dependent on livestock production are therefore extremely vulnerable not only in the short term, but also the longer term.

In response to current fodder deficits and the longer-term need for reliable sources of feed, FAO plans to continue its support to households for community-based fodder production. Households in lowland riverine areas targeted by the ongoing intervention are already benefiting from increased drought preparedness and income generation from the marketing of forage. To benefit from the anticipated floodwaters induced by El Niño, FAO will support pastoralist households in riverine areas with forage seeds, planting material and tools, as well as extension support, thereby increasing the availability and affordability of feed. This will complement the provision of emergency feed support to enable a smooth, cost-effective transition from input distribution to self-sustaining production. Beneficiaries will be able to sustainably rebuild their livelihoods as a result.

Target: 30 000 households

Implementation: July to August (potentially July pending arrival of *belg* rains)

Activities:

- Procurement and distribution of 3 000 *quintals* of forage seeds, as well as fodder planting material and tools to 30 000 identified households.

(v) [Support to animal health interventions and vector control](#)

Outbreaks of livestock disease are closely linked to climate variability, especially widespread elevated rainfall after long droughts, as this brings about an explosive growth in vector populations and hence vector-borne diseases. Based on experience from past El Niño events, it is likely that heavy rains will lead to flooding, especially in southern Ethiopia. These rains will create new and additional needs owing to the greatly enhanced risk of disease outbreaks and render households whose livelihoods depend on their animals extremely vulnerable.

In response to the increased risk of disease outbreaks posed by flooding, FAO aims to support livestock-dependent households through the vaccination and treatment of their animals, as well as enhanced disease reporting and surveillance. Vaccination and treatment of livestock against common diseases and internal and external parasites will be conducted through mass campaigns, especially in flood-prone areas. Community-based animal health workers will be supported through the distribution of veterinary supplies. Alongside animal health interventions, vector and disease surveillance will be prioritized, especially building capacity to timely report the emergence of transboundary animal diseases such as *peste des petits ruminants*, contagious caprine pleuropneumonia and lumpy skin disease, among others (including Rift Valley fever).

Target: 250 000 households

Implementation: immediately following the onset of rains

Activities:

- Awareness creation and sensitization of target communities in vulnerable areas.
- Target 3 million animals belonging to 250 000 households with livestock vaccination and treatment against common animal diseases.
- Distribution of veterinary supplies to community-based animal health workers.

(vi) [Restore livelihoods through restocking with small ruminants](#)

The herds of pastoralists and agropastoralists have been greatly reduced. Drought has killed hundreds of thousands of livestock, and many households have sold their animals to be able to afford food and other basic household needs. With or without their remaining livelihood assets, these households are extremely vulnerable and unable to sustainably feed themselves or generate stable income. Flooding induced by El Niño is expected to exacerbate this vulnerability.

In response, FAO will target drought-affected communities in Afar and Somali Regions to recover their main source of livelihood through restocking with small ruminants. In collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries and regional and *woreda* authorities, FAO will procure local goats and sheep to distribute 10 to each identified beneficiary household (mostly female, with at least one male). Able to produce two kids/lambs per year, the beneficiaries would be able to quickly resume their livelihoods. The intervention will be dependent on the arrival of rains to ensure that the small ruminants have sustainable access to pasture and fodder. Livestock extension service experts from the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries will conduct regular visits to beneficiary communities to ensure the sustainability of the intervention beyond this emergency support. Restocking livestock-dependent households with goats and sheep has the potential to substantially improve their food security and nutrition, as well as income generation through the sale of milk and dairy products.

Target: 10 000 households

Implementation: three months following the onset of rains

Activities:

- Identification and selection of the most vulnerable households in Afar and Somali Regions.
- Procure 100 000 goats and sheep from the local market and distribute 10 small ruminants each to the 10 000 targeted households.
- Deliver training on goat and sheep management, feeding, healthcare and drought-sensitive livestock rearing techniques.



Enhance resilience of households affected by El Niño

Immediate interventions are necessary and vital to the success of the main *meher* cropping season in 2016/17, which has the potential to contribute to improved food security and nutrition across the country. Emergency response will address immediate needs, as well as help agricultural households recover in the longer term. However, specific response is required to build the resilience of households to future climatic shocks. To protect agriculture-based livelihoods and enhance agricultural households' resilience, FAO plans to adopt the *caisses de résilience* approach and conduct cash-for-work activities to improve critical infrastructure, directly benefiting 30 700 households⁷.

(i) Adoption of the *caisses de résilience* approach for better mitigation of future crises

Caisses de résilience is an integrated community-centred approach, linking social, technical and financial dimensions in a mutually reinforcing way. Through the combined efforts of the three dimensions, the objective of *caisses de résilience* is to diversify and accumulate assets to increase the resilience of agricultural livelihoods at household and community levels. To achieve high impact, the approach combines lessons on good agricultural practices (crop and livestock production, and land and water management) with savings and loan schemes while strengthening social dynamics and empowerment. Building mainly on farmers' and women's groups, the *caisses de résilience* approach develops and strengthens knowledge and skills through flexible learning methodologies and collective action. Implemented by FAO in eight countries across Africa, the success of the approach has been shown in numerous cases, as well as its ability to be adapted to various contexts.

While the *caisses de résilience* approach appears to be new to Ethiopia, FAO and agriculture sector actors have been implementing activities related to the three dimensions for years, such as support to seed producer associations, financial mechanisms, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and working with women's associations on nutrition and hygiene, among others. Expanding on existing efforts and creating awareness on this integrated approach, FAO will target the most vulnerable communities with limited credit access that have been regularly affected by erratic rains and are at risk of displacement. Selected communities will be in areas where farmer and pastoralist field schools are present, and the intervention will specifically target women's associations and youth groups.

Target: 13 000 households

Implementation: January to December

Activities:

- Introduce the *caisses de résilience* approach to 13 000 households, including 675 farmers' groups, including 300 women's groups in areas affected by El Niño.
- Create awareness among partners on the *caisses de resiliencia* approach.
- Alignment of Government and resource partner strategies with the *caisses de résilience* approach.

(ii) Cash-for-work initiatives to improve critical infrastructure for water access

In drought-affected areas far from river basins, the main source of water for communities and their livestock are surface water resources – i.e. ponds and *birkats* (relatively small underground reservoirs lined with cement) – and groundwater resources – i.e. wells and *elas* (traditional hand-dug wells). The current drought has decimated water supplies for household and livestock use; as water resources dry up and become shallow, it is becoming increasingly important to keep existing sources functional to maintain access to water.

Furthermore, El Niño may cause severe flooding in Afar, Amhara, Somali and SNNP Regions during the *belg* and *meher* rains (April/May and August/September). Infrastructure in flood-prone areas is weak

⁷ Targeted households may benefit under more than one intervention under the Response Plan.

owing to poor maintenance, posing great risk to riverine communities and their livelihood assets. As river catchments are bare and soil degraded, flooding could occur even in areas with low amounts of rainfall. Poor infrastructure compounded by floodwaters can cause significant damage to riverbeds and embankments. When riverbanks are destroyed and riverbeds are silted up, waters rise above normal levels, flooding homes, farmlands and grazing areas and greatly impacting the lives and livelihoods of affected communities. Prolonged flooding can further lead to outbreaks of water-borne diseases, impacting already vulnerable pastoralist and agropastoral households.

Preparedness measures and early action are critical to mitigating the impacts of El Niño in flood-prone areas, including enhancing water-related infrastructure. In preparation for the expected floods and to avoid mass devastation and displacement caused by flooding, FAO proposes to improve critical infrastructure through the cash-for-work approach. Communities in areas expected to be most affected will be employed to desilt canals and water points, rehabilitate catchment areas along pastoral migratory routes, stabilize riverbanks and gabions, and repair roads to ensure access to water sources. Targeted beneficiaries will receive training specific to the infrastructure to be improved and the procurement of local materials will be prioritized where available. Through the employment of the local community and provision of cash compensation for their labour, drought-affected households will be able to meet their basic household needs, as well as have increased access to clean water. This resilience-building initiative will provide longer-term support to communities and their livestock, protecting lives and livelihood assets through the rehabilitation of infrastructure.

Target: 17 700 households

Implementation: January to April

Activities:

- Engage 17 700 households through cash-for-work activities to rehabilitate selected critical infrastructure.
- Increase water access for 33 930 households through the desilting of 59 water points, serving an estimated 313 500 livestock.
- Desilt canals affected by flooding to enable communities to resume agricultural production.
- Rehabilitate the most critical water catchments along pastoral migratory routes, considering location, number and type of animals served, among other criteria.
- Stabilize riverbanks and gabions with locally procured materials.
- Prioritize and repair roads to provide access to water catchments, farmlands and markets.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT TARGETS AND DIRECT AND INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES			
Region	Number of water points to be desilted	Total number of households benefiting from cash-for-work	Total number of households benefiting from water points
Afar	12	3 600	6 880
Amhara	9	2 700	5 160
Oromia	13	3 900	7 560
Somali	15	4 500	8 600
SNNP	10	3 000	5 730
Total	59	17 700	33 930



Coordination for efficient and effective response

Owing to its high exposure to risks, the performance of the agriculture sector is very volatile in many parts of Ethiopia. The country has experienced multiple shocks to agricultural production over the past 30 years, which have had huge impact on food availability and affordability, and malnutrition rates.

Since the onset of El Niño, the number of affected people has increased at a rapid pace. In less than half a year, food insecurity more than doubled, and the number of areas in need of nutrition support quadrupled. The effects of El Niño, including drought conditions and likely flooding, are expected to continue until August 2016. With current funding and response capacity, stakeholders are ill-equipped to properly assess and respond to the surmounting crisis. The challenges now facing food security – including agricultural and livestock production needs and water shortages – are complex and intertwined, requiring regular and extensive evaluation.

In response to the current situation, UN agencies and NGOs are showing remarkable support and partnership with the Government to reach populations in need. However, the magnitude and complexity of the situation calls for enhanced coordination to match the scale of the emergency, as well as quantitative analysis to better understand the prevailing dynamics of the crisis. It is therefore critically important to explicitly and comprehensively address risks to the agriculture sector in a coordinated manner.

Strengthening emergency coordination for overall response

In Ethiopia, coordination of the agriculture and livelihood sector is co-led by the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources and FAO. Bringing together key actors (Government, UN agencies, NGOs and resource partners), the DRM–ATF operates at national and regional levels and covers all aspects of agriculture, including natural resource management, crop and livestock production, nutrition and disaster risk management. As co-chair, FAO supports the Government in coordinating initiatives focusing on agricultural livelihoods. However, given the rapidly deteriorating situation, as well as the changing institutional environment of the Government (e.g. the formation of new ministries such as the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries), it is clear that FAO will need to reinforce its capacity to coordinate response in support of the public sector.

To respond to the current El Niño situation, FAO is assisting the Government in putting a coordination structure in place. FAO is facilitating the creation of emergency livestock and seed coordination groups at federal, regional and subregional levels, as well as advocating for rapid and structured food insecurity assessments and needs and response analyses. Enhancing capacity to respond to the emergency nature of the current situation is urgent and vital to the success of implementing a relevant, efficient and effective response that is accountable to the affected populations.

Activities:

- Rapid action to strengthen field coordination in order to maintain data collection and monitoring capacity.
- Technical backstopping of regional and zonal coordination structures in emergency response plan design, implementation and coordination.

Specific food security and agriculture sector assessments, evaluations and analyses

The Government of Ethiopia is the main primary source of the country's agricultural data, being engaged in data collection, compilation, analysis and reporting at all levels. Main sources include national institutions such as the Central Statistical Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, the DRMFSS and the Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise, among others. With regard to food security, joint seasonal assessments are undertaken by Government and development partners, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the DRMFSS. However, these assessments are largely qualitative and are therefore unable to accurately assess the urgent needs currently facing the population. It is therefore necessary to improve the ability to conduct

rapid quantitative assessments, evaluation and monitoring to quickly inform decision-making in response to the El Niño crisis and develop appropriate and quality actions for desired impact.

Owing to its vast technical expertise, FAO is a key driver of food security analysis globally, regionally and at national level. With soaring needs as a result of El Niño, FAO plans to enhance its country-level analysis capacity in Ethiopia to better coordinate stakeholders for response monitoring and analysis and consolidate wide-ranging evidence on food insecure populations. During past crises, FAO's work has been key to understanding the degree, localities, affected populations and underlying causes of food insecurity. To comprehensively understand the food security situation, FAO proposes to reactivate the use of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) in Ethiopia. The IPC is a set of analytical tools and processes used to analyse and classify the severity of a food security situation according to scientific international standards. Enhanced analysis will provide stakeholders with the data necessary to make informed decisions – particularly essential in the current situation, where decisions will be time-critical and require the most accurate and up-to-date information.

In 2016, FAO Ethiopia aims to support the Government in enhancing food security and agriculture sector information availability and management, especially in areas hardest hit by the ongoing El Niño event. To identify the root causes of food security in Ethiopia and complement the IPC, FAO will support several types of assessments, including quantitative seed system and livestock fodder assessments, as well as a study to assess the level of indebtedness among agricultural households. FAO also proposes to conduct a rapid study in affected areas to identify existing water point access constraints and current management at household and village levels. Furthermore, FAO will conduct evaluations jointly with Government, UN agencies and NGOs to evaluate the impact of humanitarian and early recovery interventions to analyse gaps and identify outstanding needs for the short and longer term.

Activities:

- By March 2016, reactivate the IPC in Ethiopia and develop tools for enhanced analysis and understanding of the food security and nutrition situation of areas affected by El Niño to inform the response of stakeholders and policy-makers, among others.
- Coordinate and support: (i) seed security assessments; (ii) livestock sector assessments, with specific focus on fodder availability; (iii) level of indebtedness among agricultural households; and (iv) a rapid water access assessment.
- Undertake regular assessments to review the evolving emergency situation and response status for the timely identification of gaps and possible solutions in humanitarian coordination.

Dialogue with Government and private sector for efficient response to the crisis

Repeated failure of crops and increased livestock mortalities due to the El Niño-induced drought has led to severely depleted income for agricultural households, further driving into debt many households who were already financially unstable before the crisis. As a result, even if normal rains resume, some farmers and pastoralists may not be eligible for financial assistance due to poor credit history. In response, FAO will conduct an assessment on the financial status of agricultural households to identify those most vulnerable and in debt. FAO also plans to assist vulnerable communities by engaging with Government and the private sector to promote market regulation for agricultural inputs, thereby ensuring affordable prices. Avoiding extreme price increases for seed, feed and other inputs would help many vulnerable households to resume their livelihoods. FAO will therefore discuss with Government on the regulation of the inputs required for the overall agriculture sector response to the effects of El Niño. As demand will increase for crop seed and fodder, negotiating the prices of crop seeds and sugar byproducts for feed (e.g. molasses and sugar cane tops) will be critical to enabling households to resume agricultural production.

Activities:

- Organize consultative meetings and negotiations with the Government and private sector to regulate the cost of seeds and sugar byproducts for feed to avoid extreme price increases.

FAO'S RESPONSE CAPACITY

In order to effectively respond to the scale and severity of the El Niño crisis, in December 2015 FAO deployed a surge response team involving operations and programming staff to enhance the capacity of the Ethiopia country office. Early next year, an international procurement officer will also be deployed to assist project implementation. To strengthen FAO's existing field presence, the Organization will enhance the capacity of its six offices already working in close collaboration with local stakeholders, implementing and technical partners and authorities.

Enhanced capacity of FAO in Ethiopia will ensure the effective implementation of project activities jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource Development and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, and in partnership with community-based organizations, NGOs and private sector actors. Direct involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource Development and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries will ensure complementarities with existing national projects and support to the targeted communities. A participatory approach will be adopted to ensure inclusive views of all stakeholders for effective project implementation. FAO will use national DRM-ATF criteria in the selection of beneficiaries and implement similar methodology for the procurement and distribution of agricultural inputs to beneficiaries. FAO will work with national- and regional-level government to lead implementation, ensuring coordination among partners and adequate participation of the beneficiary communities at every stage of the project.

The project team will monitor FAO activities throughout the implementation period to ensure their implementation is carried out as planned and to identify and address any challenges affecting the achievement of the objectives of the Response Plan. The El Niño Response Plan team will conduct output monitoring activities midway through, at the end of, and shortly following project implementation. Findings and recommendations from monitoring activities will be discussed with the stakeholders involved for appropriate follow-up action.

Joint monitoring by regional government and *woreda* authorities will be conducted on a regular basis. Findings and recommendations from these assessments will be discussed with partners for action, and a report compiled. These regular monitoring missions will inform project planning and review. The progress, operational effectiveness and potential constraints assessed during the project period will be cross-checked and pertinent adjustments and corrective measures will be taken immediately. At the end of project implementation, a final report will be prepared detailing lessons learned, challenges faced and the overall achievement of the El Niño Response Plan and its contribution to household food security and nutrition in Ethiopia.

ANNEX I: BUDGET

Description	Number of targeted households	Budget
Reduce the food gap and enhance nutrition through support to agricultural production		
(i) Emergency seed distribution to affected areas for the <i>meher</i> season	100 000	10 500 000
(ii) Quality drought-resilient seed production at community level	10 000	2 500 000
(iii) Reduce risk of malnutrition through backyard vegetable production initiatives	13 500	3 380 000
(iv) Rapid response for irrigated food production at household level	8 000	3 200 000
Subtotal	131 500	19 580 000
Safeguard livestock-based livelihoods		
(i) Provision of cash to destock already weak animals through slaughter	33 500	6 700 000
(ii) Protection of core breeding animals through survival feed provision	14 400	2 880 000
(iii) Voucher-based supplementary feed support	6 000	1 200 000
(iv) Increase fodder production at community level	30 000	3 800 000
(v) Support to animal health interventions and vector control	250 000	2 000 000
(vi) Restore livelihoods through restocking with small ruminants	10 000	2 000 000
Subtotal	293 900	18 580 000
Enhance resilience of households' affected by El Niño		
(i) Adoption of the <i>caisses de résilience</i> approach for better mitigation of future crises	13 000	3 900 000
(ii) Cash-for-work initiatives to improve critical infrastructure for water access	17 700	5 405 000
Subtotal	30 700	9 305 000
Coordination for efficient and effective response		
(i) Coordination of overall response	N/A	2 540 000
Subtotal	N/A	2 540 000
Total	360 000*	50 000 000

*N.B.: The actual total of targeted households is an estimated to 360 000 households (i.e. 1.8 million people), as some households may receive assistance under more than one activity.

ANNEX II: ESTIMATED RAINFALL DEVIATION FROM LONG-TERM AVERAGES

Source: FAO, USGS

