



SITUATION UPDATE

The Sahel crisis

2012



4 December 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The growing season in the Sahel is coming to an end** with good crop prospects. Still, **the situation in the region remains difficult** with the erosion of livelihoods during the 2012 crisis, owing to the uneven pastoral situation, flooding, the Desert Locust threat and high grain prices combined with widespread poverty and high vulnerability, in particular for those households that could not benefit from livelihood support during the past season.
- **During the 2012 Sahel crisis an estimated 18.7 million people have faced food and nutrition insecurity.** More than **1 million children** under five were at risk of **severe acute malnutrition**. Despite humanitarian assistance, millions may remain food insecure in 2013, especially as a result of the limited support to livelihoods in 2012 and cereal prices remaining at high level.
- **The humanitarian and security situation in Mali is deteriorating**, due to the conflict in the northern part of the country, with **serious repercussions on the region and beyond**. An estimated 413 731 people have left their homes; 203 843 are internally displaced and 209 888 have crossed the borders to neighbouring countries, primarily Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has requested **USD 112 million** for urgent action in 2012, to improve the food and nutrition security of 7.8 million vulnerable people in the Sahel.
- To date, FAO has received **USD 41.2million**. With this amount, FAO has assisted or is assisting more than **4.6 million beneficiaries** by supporting food and livestock production, animal protection and related technical assistance.
- As of now, **funding has not been enough to adequately address the crisis in a timely manner** and a **funding gap of USD 70.8 million** remains in order to address food and nutrition insecurity in the region.
- Moreover, a **Desert Locust threat**, the most serious since 2005, is placing the livelihoods of 50 million people in the Sahel at risk.
- An additional **USD 10 million was requested to address the Desert Locust threat**. In response to the appeal, FAO has **received a total of USD 7.2 million, and USD 1 million has been committed bilaterally** toward components identified within the requirements for the Niger.
- **Another USD 1.8 million** is still needed to control the Desert Locust threat in the region.

Evolution of the crisis

The 2012 crisis affecting the Sahel is complex, multidimensional and driven by **widespread poverty and chronic vulnerability**. The majority of the most vulnerable people had not recovered from the previous crisis in 2010. Most of these vulnerable people were unprepared and did not have the means to withstand new shocks facing them in 2012, including erratic rains, persistent high levels of food prices, regional insecurity due to the conflict in Mali and the threat of a Desert Locust infestation.

Chronic vulnerability and weakened resilience¹ in the region has led to a food and nutrition insecurity situation in the Sahel. Recurring crises in 2005, 2008 and 2010 have weakened the livelihoods of the already vulnerable population, limiting their ability to withstand the current crisis. The nutritional status of children under five remains alarming. In the Niger, the global acute malnutrition rate is 14.8 percent and the chronic malnutrition rate 42 percent, leaving 51 percent of children stunted². In Mali, the proportion of the poor and very poor population is at 82 percent. In some regions, the poorest households continue to sell their meagre assets, further eroding their coping capacities and impoverishing them. Despite a good start to the pasture regeneration, the long dry spell has led to delays in some areas and pastoralists are still at risk of food insecurity.

Rainfall over the Sahel region has been abundant and widespread since mid-July, leading to flooding, with people in Chad, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal amounting to 90 percent of those affected. In Nigeria, more than 7.7 million people were affected by the

¹ "Resilience" is, for FAO, the ability to prevent disasters and crises or to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from those that impact nutrition, agriculture, food security and food safety (and related public health risks) in a timely, efficient and sustainable manner. This includes protecting, restoring and improving structures and functions of food and agricultural systems under threat.

² FAO/WFP *Joint Bulletin* (Sept/Oct 2012); Save the Children: *Ending the Everyday Emergency*, (July 2012).

floods (OCHA). According to recent data collected, all of the Sahel countries have been affected and nearly 1.5 million people were affected by heavy rains from July to October 2012. At the same time, some pockets have faced delays and/or below normal rains (Dosso and southwest Niger, Gao in Mali, Tambacounda and central Senegal and Burkina Faso)³. The impact these delays could have on agricultural yields should be closely monitored. So far, the current rainy season (August-October) has been normal for most of the region. Rains have improved access to drinking water and allowed for a normal growing season, except in areas in the Sahel that experienced delayed rains, deficits or recent flooding. The pastoral situation has significantly improved with rivers and water points filling up and the regeneration of pastures, leaving herds in better physical condition.

The PREGEC meeting held in Niamey, Niger from 19 to 21 November stated that the overall harvest prospects are good throughout the Sahel. The cereal production level expected in the Sahel region and in West Africa for the 2012/13 growing season amounts to 57 318 000 tonnes, including 13 688 000 tonnes of rice, 17.92 million tonnes of maize, 11 096 000 tonnes of millet, 14 341 000 tonnes of sorghum and 273 000 tonnes of other cereals. This corresponds to a 13 percent growth in production compared to last year and 18 percent compared to the average of the last five years.

Food prices remain volatile and high compared with the 5-year average. As a result, at the start of the rainy season many farmers have been unable to buy sufficient inputs to produce their staple foods. This lack of inputs for the next season will lead to inadequate vegetable and fodder production, decreasing their income and risking the diversification of their diets. High cereal prices and disruptions in trade (livestock/cereal) have deteriorated the purchasing power of herders. The most likely scenario, based on average rain forecasts, is that the regional prices will remain high but follow typical seasonal trends. In some places prices have started declining since October with the harvest. During the end of September, drops in cereal prices have been noted in the eastern and central part of the Sahel particularly in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and the Niger.

The rise in international maize, wheat and soya prices (due to atypical drought conditions in the United States) has had a limited impact in the Sahel. Still, this must continue to be monitored closely, particularly in Mauritania in view of its dependence on wheat imports.

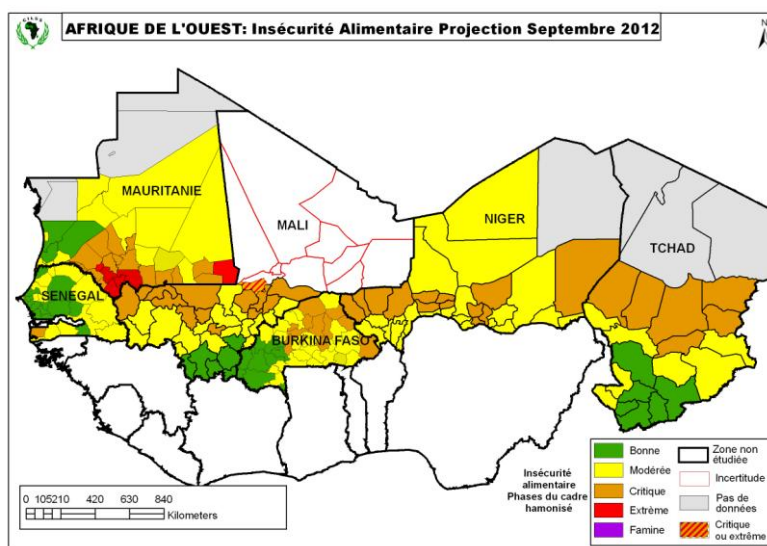
The regional political, security and human rights situation is rapidly deteriorating due to the presence of armed groups in northern Mali. The situation remains fluid and unpredictable, disrupting economic systems, as well as reducing employment opportunities, crop production and marketing capacities. In addition, direct violence and looting perpetrated by armed groups is threatening the population, but also preventing humanitarian aid workers from operating efficiently in the region. A cholera outbreak was reported in northern Mali during the beginning of July, and later in the Niger, further raising concerns. A total of 413 731 Malians have fled their homes; 203 843 people are internally displaced within the country and 209 888 have taken refuge in neighbouring countries, primarily Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger, but also Algeria, Togo and Guinea. The living conditions of refugees and their host families remain critical. The mass migration is causing further stress on communities already affected by the food and nutrition crises and creates competition over access to basic services. Many refugees have crossed the borders bringing their livestock with them, which causes additional pressure on scarce natural resources (grazing land and water) and could lead to the spread of animal diseases. In addition, this increases the risk of conflict between pastoralists, refugees and native farmers.

A regional Contingency Plan is currently being finalized by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), setting out possible responses to different scenarios that could arise in case the situation in Mali further deteriorates. The scenario of a military intervention in Northern Mali estimates an additional 100 000 IDPs in Mali and 300 000 refugees in neighbouring countries. Under OCHA coordination, and with the participation of all concerned humanitarian actors, contingency plans are being developed at the national level by Mali and the countries most affected, notably Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal. FAO is actively participating and preparing a plan for FAO's preparedness to respond.

The Desert Locust situation continues to be a threat to the food and nutrition security of some 50 million people in the Sahel region. The situation remains serious as small swarms continue to form in **Mali**, the **Niger**, and **Chad**, and adult groups have moved north to **Libya**, **Tunisia** and **Algeria**. An increasing number of adults were seen recently in **Morocco** and the **Western Sahara**. Locusts formed groups and small hopper bands in western **Mauritania**. More groups and small swarms are likely to form in the Sahel during December and move to Northwest Africa and northwest **Mauritania**. All efforts should continue to maintain and expand survey and control operations in the affected countries in order to reduce the scale of further migration and eventual breeding.

Around 14 November 2012, the Gambia declared an **outbreak of the contagious bovine pleuropneumonia** threatening livestock in the country and neighbouring countries. An estimated 500 animal deaths were reported by the Ministry of Agriculture. In Senegal, the outbreak was declared on 19 November, following the death of six animals in the region of Goudiry (Ministry of Livestock). Contingency plans for Mali and Senegal will integrate a response strategy to control the disease spread.

³ Based on FAO TAMSAT and NDVI data



FAO RESPONSE STRATEGY

i) FAO Strategic Response Framework

FAO is strongly committed to support the Sahel crisis and has prepared a response framework entitled “**Strategic Response Framework for the 2012 Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel**” (last update July 2012). The Strategy is in line with the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Strategy for the Sahel Preparation for food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel and neighbouring countries* (adopted December 2011 and updated February 2012), as well as the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) adopted for some of the affected countries⁴.

Recognizing the need to break the vicious cycle of recurrent crises and emergencies in the region, the Strategic Response Framework sets out the priorities for 2012, including a medium to long-term vision. The overall objective is *to improve the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations in the Sahel*, in order to strengthen their livelihoods and enable them to withstand and mitigate the impact of future crises. Planning for the 2013 response has already begun.

In line with this vision, the Strategic Response Framework’s five expected results are as follows: (1) **protect and strengthen resilient livelihoods** of vulnerable populations; (2) **govern risks and manage crises**: strengthened national and regional institutional capacities for coordination and management of crises and reduction of food and nutrition insecurity risks; (3) **watch to safeguard**: needs assessment, monitoring and early warning systems (EWS) at local, national and regional levels are strengthened in a concerted and integrated way; (4) **prepare to respond**: contingency plans and crisis preparedness are strengthened at regional, national and local levels; (5) **inform and communicate for knowledge**: knowledge management and dissemination of good practices in risk-reduction and strengthening resilience are promoted at all levels.

The achievement of the five strategic results is supported by the following three cross-cutting issues: (i) the central role of *capacity development*; (2) *strategic partnerships* and alliances; (3) the crucial importance of *gender equality*.

ii) FAO interventions to date

With the contributions received so far of **USD 41.2 million**, FAO is supporting some **4.6 million people** affected by the crisis through the implementation of the following activities:

1. **Support to food crop and off-season production**: activities include targeting the main rainy agricultural season for the production of cereals such as rice, maize, sorghum, millet, cowpeas, groundnuts and focus on the:
 - a. distribution of agricultural inputs (food crop seeds, fertilizers, small agricultural tools, agricultural material to build fences, etc.);
 - b. rehabilitation of irrigation areas, water points and degraded lands;
 - c. introduction of drought resistant vegetable varieties;
 - d. strengthening the food chain and marketing sector (storage, processing and transportation of agricultural goods); and
 - e. integrated food nutrition activities.
2. **Support to domestic animal protection and production**: activities under this component include:
 - a. protection of livestock, provision of veterinary multi-vitamin and mineral food complements and vaccination campaigns;
 - b. technical support for livestock management and animal health; and
 - c. restocking of herds through the distribution of vaccinated small ruminants and poultry.

⁴ Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Niger.

3. **Desert Locust:** focused on the following activities:

- a. strengthening the operational capacity and security measures of the national survey and control teams;
- b. triangulation of pesticides;
- c. provision of technical assistance; and
- a. preparation for up-scaling of interventions.

In order to reverse the cycle of food and nutrition insecurity in the Sahel, it is essential that emergency and rehabilitation interventions are combined with medium and longer term support, as emphasized in the FAO Strategic Response Framework.

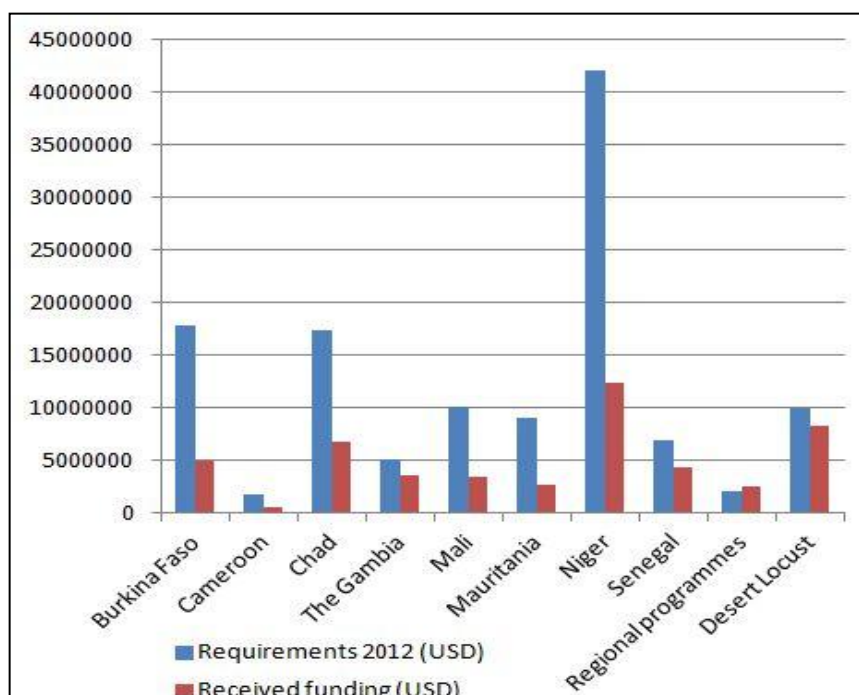
Accordingly, FAO’s ongoing regional development interventions are the backbone of the response to the current crisis and include, *inter alia*, the following initiatives: (i) Spanish-funded Water Management and Food Security Initiative for five West African countries, out of which four are Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Senegal, for a total of USD 20 million; (ii) Italian-funded Food Security through the Commercialization Programme, focused on value addition in seven West African countries, with a total budget of USD 21 million, including Mali (USD 4.2 million) and Senegal (USD 3.3 million); and (iii) South-South Cooperation support from China to Mali and Senegal, from Vietnam to Chad, and from Morocco to the Niger.

iii) Funding requirements 2012

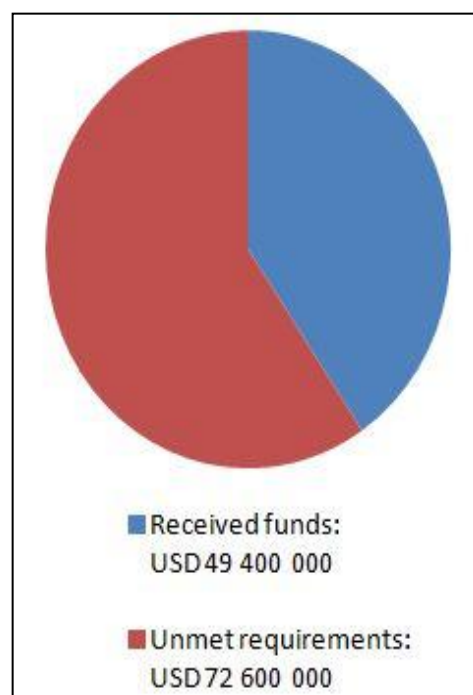
The diagrams below illustrate the funding requirements for 2012. To date, these needs have only been partially covered: **a funding gap of USD 72.6 million (60 percent of requirements) still remains** (including USD 1.8 million for the Desert Locust control activities). Priority activities for each country are provided in the following country updates.

Several donors are contributing to FAO’s interventions to address the Sahel Crisis, including Belgium, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the European Union and its Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), Finland, France, Italy, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States. The FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) is also contributing to address immediate needs.

Funding requirements and received funds per country (USD)



Total needs 2012 (USD 122 101 078)



Taking into account the agriculture calendar of the Sahel region at this stage, **support to animal protection and production, as well as Desert Locust control are the next priority activities that urgently require a renewed commitment from donors.** While it is no longer possible to contribute to the production of food crops, interventions targeting **off-season vegetable production** can be supported and are very much needed during the current lean season.

FAO CAPACITY AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

i) FAO presence in the Sahel region

FAO is represented in all of the countries affected by the Sahel Crisis and has the capacity needed to implement its Strategy (mentioned above). In Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, the Niger and Senegal, FAO Country Offices also include Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Units dealing specifically with activities pertaining to the crisis. In addition, the FAO Subregional Emergency and Rehabilitation Office based in Senegal and the FAO Subregional Office in West Africa based in Ghana, with the support of FAO headquarters, are planning and regionally coordinating the FAO global response to the crisis in the short, medium

and longer term, including the sharing of best practices throughout the subregion. These offices also contribute, together with key partners, to food and nutrition security information analysis.

ii) Partnerships and Coordination mechanisms

In order to carry out its mandate, FAO is closely collaborating and partnering with the host governments and local authorities at all levels, national and research institutions, other United Nations agencies, the donor community and civil society, local associations and international non-governmental organizations.

FAO also participates in national thematic working groups/clusters covering areas such as food and nutrition security, humanitarian and emergency coordination and early warning and livestock. and the organization often has a prominent, if not lead, coordinating role due to its expertise. In addition, FAO and WFP co-lead the Food Security Clusters that are active in Chad, the Niger and Mali. An additional Food Security Cluster is foreseen in Mauritania. In Senegal, FAO and WFP co-lead the Food Security Coordination Group. In collaboration with the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), WFP and host governments, FAO regularly offers its financial support and technical expertise to monitoring exercises such as crop assessments, food security and market surveys, vulnerability assessment and targeting evaluations.

Within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)/Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) process, FAO is also supporting the formulation of National Agricultural and Food Security Investment programmes. National Programmes for Food Security (NPFS) have been prepared by all of the Sahel countries, with Mauritania as the most recent to be completed. Two NPFS (Chad and Mali) are under implementation. The NPFS for the Sahel countries require an investment of about USD 1.89 billion, of which only 20 percent has been mobilized.

FAO has supported the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)⁵ in the development of the CAADP Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (PRIA). A thematic programme from PRIA focuses on the reduction of vulnerability to food crises and the promotion of stable and sustainable access to food, estimated at USD 176 million. This programme aims to establish a system of regional emergency humanitarian food reserves. It includes the review and adoption of the Charter for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises, covering West African countries (beyond the Sahel) and actors (beyond states, to include regional organizations and non-state actors). The charter stresses the importance at regional level, to avoid and tackle food crises. FAO also supports ECOWAS, through the Dakar based IASC Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group, to develop its strategy, mechanism and Plan of Action to intervene in humanitarian crises.

COUNTRY UPDATES

For detailed information regarding the specific country and regional interventions and planned activities, kindly refer to the aforementioned [FAO regional strategic framework](#): **“Strategic Response Framework for the 2012 Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel”**.

BURKINA FASO

- Estimated number of people affected: 2 million people (15 percent of the population).
- Number of people targeted by FAO: 933 800.
- Funding needs: USD 17 835 000; received: USD 5 866 322; funding gap: USD 11 968 678.
- With the funding received, FAO is around 764 000 persons, including 2 907 Malian refugee households, through the following main lines of intervention:
 - rehabilitating the cereal production capacity of vulnerable households for the 2012 agricultural campaign;
 - restocking of herds for vulnerable households;
 - supporting livestock breeding and veterinary inputs to vulnerable herder households;
 - supporting fodder production and rehabilitate good quality fodder reserves for vulnerable households; and
 - supporting vegetable production to help vulnerable households affected by the food and nutrition crisis recover.

CAMEROON

- Estimated number of people affected: 350 000 people (23 percent of the population).
- Number of people targeted by FAO: 191 037 people in the northern region.
- Funding needs: USD 1 711 000; received: USD 611 011; funding gap: USD 1 099 989.
- With the funding received, FAO is assisting 150 000 persons, through the following main lines of intervention:
 - distribution of improved seeds (maize, sorghum and millet) and other agricultural inputs; and
 - supplying of animal feed and vaccines.

⁵ The following Sahel countries are members of ECOWAS: Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal. Cameroon, Chad and Mauretania are not members.

CHAD

- Estimated number of people affected: 3.6 million people (32 percent of the population).
- Number of people targeted by FAO: 993 798 people.
- Funding needs: USD 17 377 080; received: USD 6 743 186; funding gap: USD 10 633 894.
- With the funding received, FAO is assisting some 560 000 persons, through the following main lines of intervention:
 - distributing seeds and farming inputs for the rainy season;
 - providing supplementary feed for livestock;
 - providing emergency agriculture-horticulture assistance to populations affected by the drought ;
 - supporting small scale irrigation infrastructure for vulnerable agro-pastoralists;
 - supporting internally displaced persons, returnees, and host families with food processing, small infrastructure and restocking in small ruminants in the Ouaddai and Sila;
 - supporting natural resources management, in partnership with WFP (Food for work); and
 - supporting the national Information System and the Coordination Unit for emergency agricultural activities and assessments.

THE GAMBIA

- Estimated number of people affected: 241 000 in the Gambia (18 percent of the population).
- Number of people targeted by FAO: 241 000 people.
- Funding needs: USD 5 076 945; received: USD 3 526 171; funding gap: USD 1 550 774.
- With the funding received, FAO is assisting more than 172 000 persons, through the following main lines of intervention:
 - providing selected seeds and fertilizers for the rainy seasons and for vegetable production in the dry seasons;
 - providing animal feed supplement, vaccines and veterinary supplies to herders; and
 - strengthening technical capacities in agricultural production and pest management.

MALI

- Estimated number of people affected: 4.6 million people (32 percent of the population).
- Number of people targeted by FAO: 380 825 people.
- Funding needs: USD 10 050 000; received: USD 3 487 146; funding gap: USD 6 562 854.
- With the funding received, FAO is assisting vulnerable populations through the following main lines of intervention:
 - strengthening the livelihoods of vulnerable populations, including IDPs, by supporting the pastoral and agricultural production capacities of affected households;
 - strengthening the capacities of vegetable farmers and small ruminant herders to increase their resilience to climatic shocks; and
 - improving household access to a highly nutritional and diversified diet, and good nutritional practices.

MAURITANIA

- Estimated number of people affected: 987 000 people (30 percent of the population).
- Number of people targeted by FAO: 497 500 people.
- Funding needs: USD 9 000 000; received: USD 2 671 554; funding gap: USD 6 328 446.
- With the funding received, FAO is assisting around 506 000 persons, including Malian refugees, through the following main lines of intervention:
 - distributing seeds and farming inputs for the main planting season;
 - supporting vegetable production and nutrition education to improve the nutrition of vulnerable people;
 - providing animal feed, vaccines and other veterinary inputs;
 - supporting fodder production, including through the introduction of varieties adapted to the ecosystem;
 - supporting nutrition through distribution of foods coming from destocking operations; and
 - strengthening of disaster risk management and coordination capacities.

THE NIGER

- Estimated number of people affected: 6.4 million people (42 percent of the population).
- Number of people targeted by FAO: 4 180 000 people.
- Funding needs: USD 42 073 553; received: USD 12 338 812; funding gap: USD 29 734 741.
- With the funding received, FAO is assisting around 2.1 million persons, through the following main lines of intervention:
 - supporting the cereal production for the 2012 agricultural campaign, through farmers field schools for seed multiplication, introduction of drought resistant vegetable varieties and integrated pest management activities;
 - restocking of herds and technical support to vulnerable households, including through pastoral field schools;
 - rehabilitating irrigation areas and water points and degraded lands;

- supporting fodder production and provision of veterinary inputs to vulnerable herder households; and
- supporting vegetable production and nutrition for vulnerable households affected.

SENEGAL

- Number of people affected: 739 000 people (6 percent of the population).
- Number of people targeted by FAO: 420 000.
- Funding needs: USD 6 850 000; received: USD 4 398 002; funding gap: USD 2 451 998.
- With the funding received, FAO is assisting around 332 000 persons, through the following main lines of intervention:
 - strengthening the agricultural production capacity of vulnerable households through the distribution of food crops, vegetable seeds and animal feed; and
 - strengthening vulnerable households' resilience through training on production techniques, awareness of disaster risk management (DRM) and dissemination of agro-meteorological information.

LOCUSTS

FAO continues to ensure overall emergency campaign coordination and provision of technical assistance.

Survey and control operations: Operations in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger have continued as needed throughout October and November. Backpack and vehicle mounted sprayers for the pesticide application were delivered to the national Desert Locust control unit in Mali. Financial support has been provided to the Niger to rent ten vehicles for the survey and control operations during the month of November. Tenders have been launched for the procurement of HF radios, camping gear and generators to further strengthen survey and control operations in Chad and Mali.

Pesticide triangulation: Agreed donations of pesticides from Algeria: 20 000 litres for Chad and 40 000 litres for Mali; Morocco: 60 000 litres each for Mali and the Niger; Senegal: 18 000 litres for Chad.

Airlifting: In collaboration with WFP, the first airlifting of pesticide was successfully carried out in October (32 000 litres for Mali and 18 000 litres for Chad); a second airlifting of 30 000 litres of pesticides to the Niger is planned for the end of November; and a third airlifting of 20 000 litres of pesticides to Chad is foreseen for the beginning of December.

Aerial operations: The deployment of an aircraft is on standby in case aerial operations are needed in mid-December.

Information system (eLocust3): A project to upgrade the current information system (eLocust2) started in October, and will take advantage of the latest technology. The eLocust3 will improve the collection and recording of field data and its transmission through a faster, more reliable and cost-effective manner. This will lead to more precise and timely analysis and early warning. Field deployment of eLocust3 is expected to take place in Spring 2013.

LINKS

- FAO website on the Sahel crisis: <http://www.fao.org/crisis/sahel/the-sahel-crisis/en/>
- FAO and emergencies: <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/>
- FAO Locust Watch website / Sahel threat: <http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/2002/index.html>
- DRM Regional strategy for West Africa and Sahel, 2011-2013 (FAO 2011): <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/home/news/emergency-news/emergency-detail/en/item/120920/icode/?uidf=1345>
- FAO DRR corporate framework: "Resilient livelihoods: Disaster Risk reduction for food and nutrition" security : <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2540e/i2540e00.pdf>
- Interagency (IASC) Strategy for the Sahel "Preparation for a food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel and neighbouring countries: <http://ochaonline.un.org/UrquencesEmergencies/Sahel2012/tabid/7773/lanquage/fr-FR/Default.aspx>

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