



SITUATION UPDATE

The Sahel crisis

2012



5 October 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The growing season in the Sahel witnessed a regular start. Still, difficulties of access to food and seeds are noted in many countries of the subregion and 18.7 million people** are facing food and nutrition insecurity. More than **1 million children** under the age of five are at risk of **severe acute malnutrition**.
- The **situation in Mali is particularly severe** with food and water shortages, low cereal supply, high food prices, **insecurity, political instability** and an estimated 393 431 displaced persons. A cholera outbreak during July in northern Mali is further aggravating the situation. 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 39.5 million**. With this amount, FAO 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 72.5 million** remains in order to address food and nutrition insecurity in the region.
- Moreover, a **desert locust infestation**, the most serious since 2005, is threatening the livelihoods of 50 million people in the Sahel.
- 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 3.1 million, and USD 1 million has been committed bilaterally** toward components identified within the requirements for the Niger.
- **Another USD 5.9 million** is still needed to control the desert locust threat in the region.

Evolution of the crisis

The crisis affecting the Sahel is complex, multidimensional and driven by chronic vulnerabilities. Erratic rains are causing the quality and output of harvests to decrease, high levels of food prices persist, regional insecurity in some countries continues and the threat of a desert locust infestation could affect the livelihoods of 50 million people.

***Chronic vulnerability** has meant the food and nutrition insecurity situation in the Sahel is acute, and its complexity is causing a downward spiral. Recurring crises in 2005, 2008 and 2010 have weakened the livelihoods and resilience¹ of the already vulnerable population, limiting their ability to withstand the current crisis. In some regions, the poorest households continue to sell their meagre assets, further eroding their coping capacities and impoverishing them. Pastoralists are particularly at risk as they are facing fodder shortages owing to irregular rainfall that is causing drought in certain areas and flooding in others, as well as the depletion of natural pasture as a result of climate change and environmental constraints.*

***Rainfall over the Sahel region** has been abundant and widespread since mid-July, leading to flooding in several parts of the subregion such as Chad, the Gambia, Mali, the Niger and Senegal. According to recent data collected, nearly one and a half million people were affected by heavy rains in the months of July and August 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)². The impact these delays have on agricultural yields should be closely monitored. The forecast for the current rainy season (August-October) is normal for most of the region, except in the southern part of Senegal where it is below normal, and Mauritania where it is above normal. Rains have improved access to drinking water and allowed for a normal start to the growing season, followed by favourable growing conditions and vegetative development, 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.*

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 Based on FAO TAMSAT and NDVI data

However, due to the erratic rainfall in the region, an early end to the rain cannot be excluded, which could negatively influence crops and pasture production despite abundant rain so far.

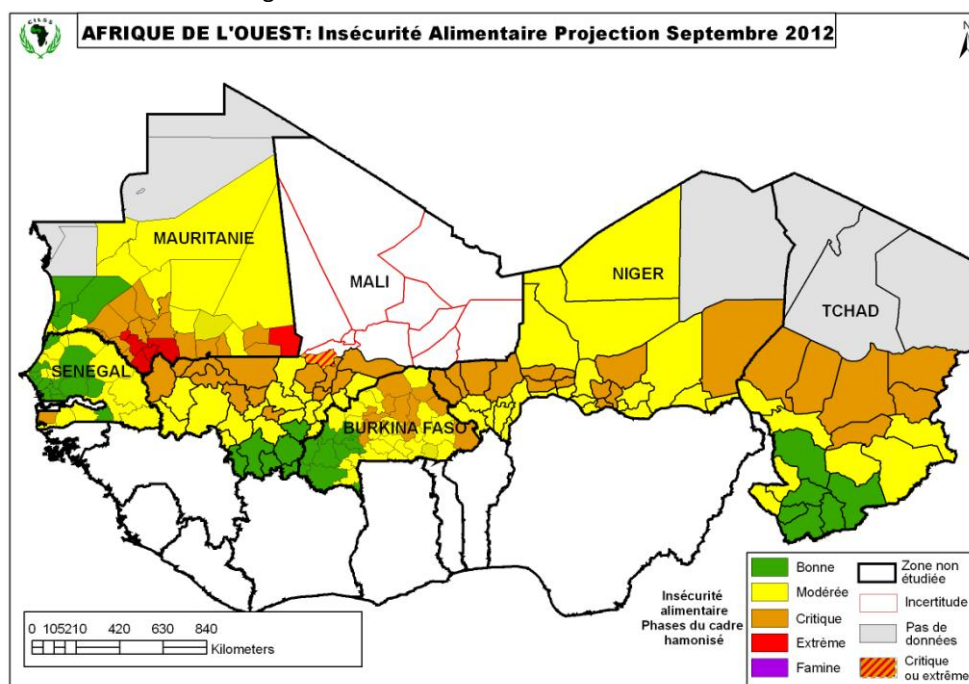
In terms of food production, the preliminary results shared for the consultation on the Agricultural and Food prospects in the Sahel and in West Africa was held in Dakar, Senegal, from 4 to 6 September 2012 within the framework of the regional surveillance system (PREGEC meeting). The cereal production level expected in the Sahel region and in West Africa for the 2012/13 growing season is between 57 000 000 and 64 000 000 tonnes, corresponding to a growth in production ranging from 5 to 17 percent when compared to last year. These figures are indicative and must be confirmed by the joint harvest assessment missions (CILSS/FAO/FEWS NET/WFP/governments) foreseen in the Sahel countries between 15 October to 2 November 2012, followed by the national analysis during 5 to 9 November 2012.

Food prices remain volatile and, compared with the 5-year average, high. As a result, at the start of the rain season many farmers have been unable to buy sufficient inputs to produce their staple food, risking non diversified diets, decreased income due to decreased production, a lack of sufficient inputs for next season and inadequate production of animal feed. High cereal prices and the 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, so prices should begin to decline as the October harvest approaches, and continue to fall through the end of the year. 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 USA) has had a limited impact in the Sahel, but must continue to be monitored closely, particularly in Mauritania in view of its dependence on wheat imports.

The regional political and security situation remains unstable, with 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 preventing humanitarian and aid workers from operating efficiently in the region, and has caused unusual movements of people and livestock. In the beginning of July, a cholera outbreak was reported in northern Mali, and later on in the Niger further raising concerns. Massive displacements of people and malnutrition, could lead to a sharp increase in the number of cholera cases until the end of the rainy season. In the aftermath of the Libyan conflict, a decrease in remittances and returning migrants have also been noted.

The Desert locust situation continues to be a threat to the summer rainfed crops, and consequently to the food and nutrition security of some 50 million people in the Sahel region. As a result of unusually good rains and ecological conditions this summer, a second generation of breeding commenced in early September in northern Mali, the Niger and Chad. Locust numbers will continue to increase as breeding continues until mid November 2012. Hoppers and adults are forming small groups in northeast Mali, groups of adults have already been spotted in central areas of the Niger and small hopper bands have formed in northeast Chad. Small-scale breeding occurred in southeast Mauritania during the summer and started late September in the west of Mauritania. As vegetation dries out, the scattered locusts will concentrate, forming groups and swarms that are likely to migrate towards southwest and central Libya, southern and central Algeria and northwest Mauritania from late October onwards. Swarms could then reach areas with recent rainfall in the western Sahara and western Algeria and/or move into cropping areas in Mali and Senegal, threatening this year's harvest. Current survey operations in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger should be maintained, and increased if necessary, to ensure regular monitoring of all accessible breeding areas. Control operations will be required as locusts increase and concentrate to form suitable targets.



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 neighboring countries* (adopted December 2011 and updated February 2012), as well as the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) adopted for some of the affected countries³.

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. The 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 (EW) 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, more **USD 39.5 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**: the activities included target 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 and 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 multivitamin and mineral food complements and vaccination campaigns;
 - b. technical support for livestock management and animal health; and
 - c. restocking of herds through distribution of vaccinated small ruminants and poultry.
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 Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger, Senegal, for a total of USD 20 million; (ii) Italian-funded Food Security through Commercialization programme, focused on value addition in seven West African countries, with a total

³ Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Niger.

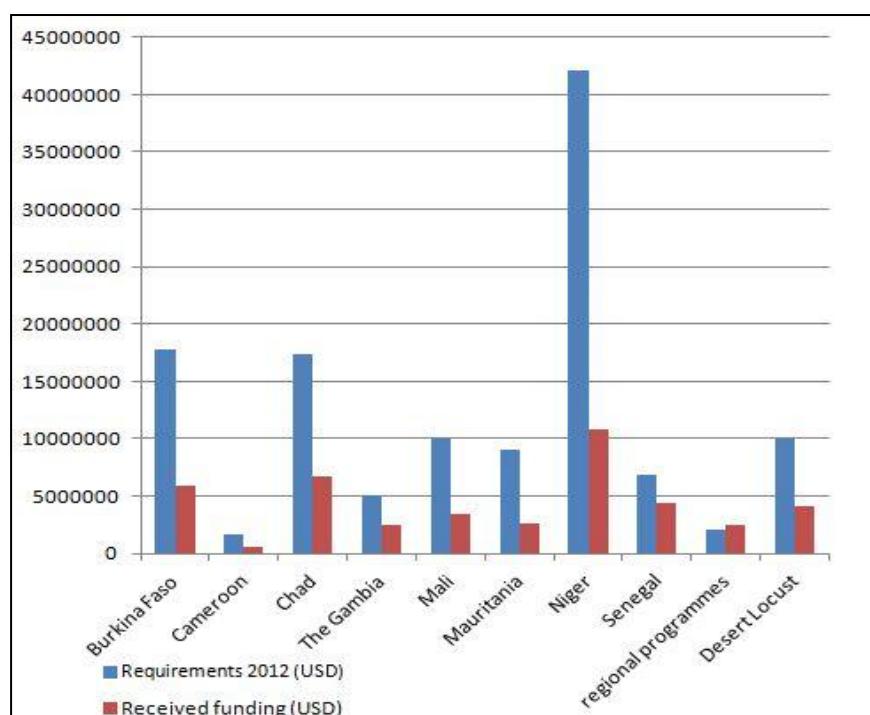
budget of USD 21 million, including Mali (USD 4.2 million) and Senegal (USD 3.3 million); and (iii) South-South Cooperation support from China to Mali and Senegal, from Vietnam to Chad, and from Morocco to the Niger.

iii) Funding requirements 2012

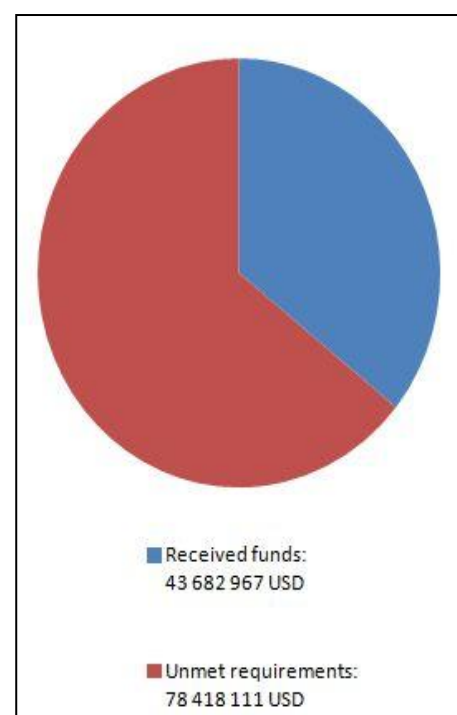
The diagrams below illustrate the funding requirements for 2012. To date, these needs have only been partially covered: **a funding gap of USD 78.4 million still remains** (including USD 5.9 million for the desert locust control activities). Priority activities for each country are provided in the following 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 agricultural calendar of the Sahel region at this stage, **support to animal protection and production and 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 vegetables 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. They 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, early warning and livestock, and it 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 and one is foreseen in Mauritania. In Senegal, FAO and WFP co-lead the Food Security Coordination Group.

In collaboration with Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), WFP and the 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 countries of the Sahel 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)⁴ 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 580 000 persons, including Malian refugees, 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.

⁴ 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 2 426 171; funding gap: USD 2 650 774.
- 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 290 000 persons, 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 10 838 812; funding gap: USD 31 234 741.
- With the funding received, FAO is assisting around 1.8 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.

- 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 221 000 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**. A **Regional technical meeting**, jointly organized by FAO, the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO) and the World Bank was held in early September in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The meeting updated the **Regional Action Plan** for September-November 2012. Initial financial requirements remained unchanged (USD 10 million). Participants included the ten CLCPRO member countries, the World Bank, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, CLCPRO and FAO.

Elaboration of a Regional Strategic Response Framework to the desert locust threat, within FAO's broader response to the current crisis in the Sahel.

Survey operations in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger continued in September and control teams are being strengthened. Interventions are limited in northern Mali due to insecurity and military escorts must accompany teams in northern areas of the Niger. Control operations were mounted in Chad, where a second mission of the Campaign Coordinator started at the end of September to further strengthen the country's technical capacity.

Pesticide triangulation. Morocco agreed to donate 60 000 litres of pesticide each for Mali and the Niger. In collaboration with WFP, the first airlifting of pesticide is scheduled for mid-October (Mali: 32 000 litres; Chad: 20 000 litres).

Aerial operations. A tender to hire three aircrafts for Mali, Mauritania and the Niger was launched in case aerial operations are needed in October and November. An aerial logistician was deployed to Senegal and the Niger.

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/UrgencesEmergencies/Sahel2012/tabid/7773/language/fr-FR/Default.aspx>

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