



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Afghanistan

DIEM – Data in Emergencies Monitoring brief, round 4

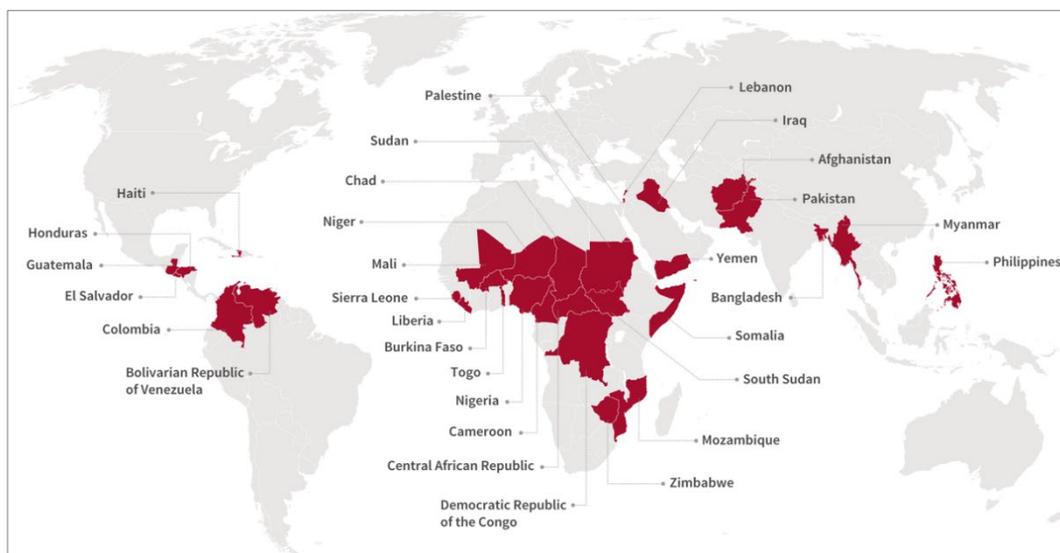
Results and recommendations
May 2022

Methodology

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched a household survey in Afghanistan through the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) System to monitor agricultural livelihoods and food security. This fourth-round survey utilized a random sample of 5 971 households in 25 provinces, representative at province level.

The survey targeted the provinces of Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Bamyan, Daykundi, Farah, Faryab, Ghazni, Ghor, Hilmand, Hirat, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunar, Kunduz, Maidan Wardak, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Nuristan, Paktika, Parwan, Samangan, Takhar and Zabul. Households were randomly selected using two-step cluster sampling and Probability Proportional to Size. Rural households were surveyed face-to-face to monitor the impacts of shocks on livelihoods and food security. The data, collected from 12 March to 4 April 2022, were weighted by demographics.

Figure 1. Countries with established DIEM-Monitoring Systems



Source of map: United Nations. 2020. *Map of the World*. Cited 6 April 2022. [un.org/geospatial/content/map-world](https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world)

About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO established the DIEM-Monitoring System to collect, analyse and disseminate data on shocks and livelihoods in countries prone to multiple shocks. DIEM-Monitoring aims to inform decision making by providing regularly updated information on how different shocks are affecting the livelihoods and food security of agricultural populations.

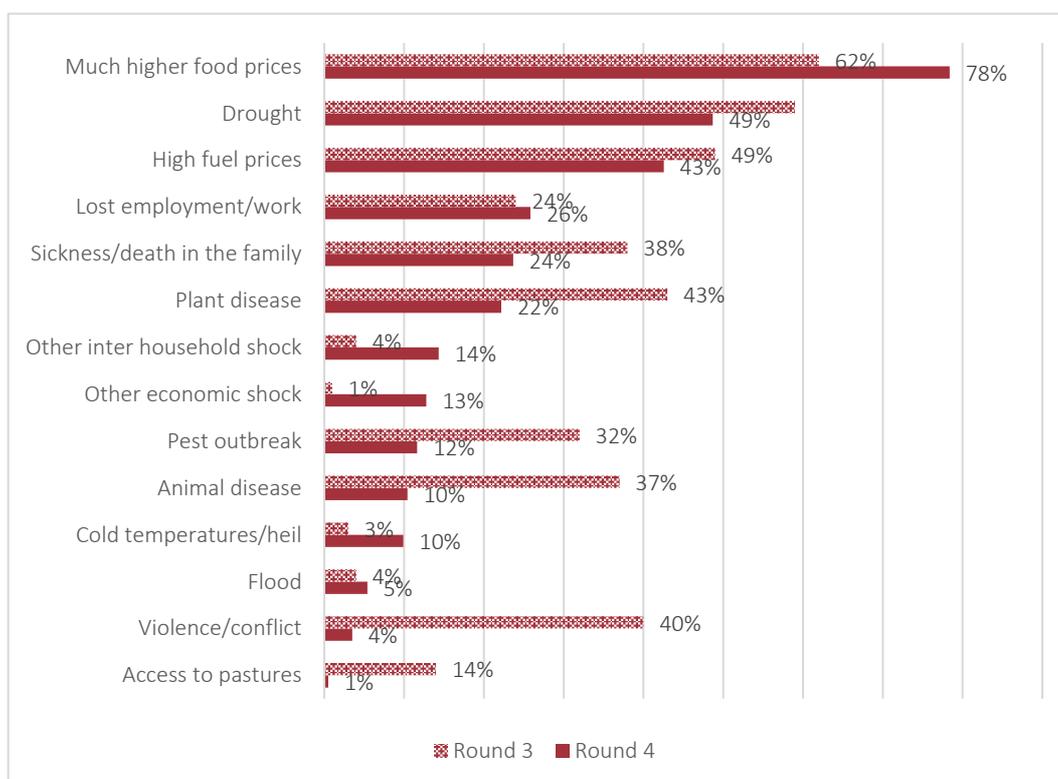
At the core of the DIEM-Monitoring System are country-level dashboards. Readers are encouraged to explore these dashboards to gain more insight into the context of Afghanistan and other countries.

> Learn more at <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/monitoring>

Income and shocks

The six most frequently cited shocks were associated with agricultural activity and almost all surveyed households faced shocks (Figure 2). Higher food prices were reported most frequently (78 percent) and surpassed the already high proportion (62 percent) reported in the last round, while conflict and access to pasture were cited much less compared to the previous round. Still prevalent were agricultural shocks (pests and diseases) and drought. There was more pronounced concentration of some shocks by province compared to the previous round: sickness/death of family members affected Balkh (55 percent of households) and Kunduz (64 percent); loss of employment was most prevalent in Kabul (66 percent), Samangan (59 percent) and Takhar (60 percent); drought was more frequent in Kandahar (92 percent), Hirat (72 percent), Ghazni (88 percent), Faryab (77 percent), Daykundi (82 percent) and Badghis (72 percent); and floods affected Wardak and Nuristan. Shocks related to food prices were less frequent in Kandahar and Nuristan compared to the last round.

Figure 2. Main shocks affecting households (percentage of respondents)



Source of data: FAO. 2022. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (March–April 2022).

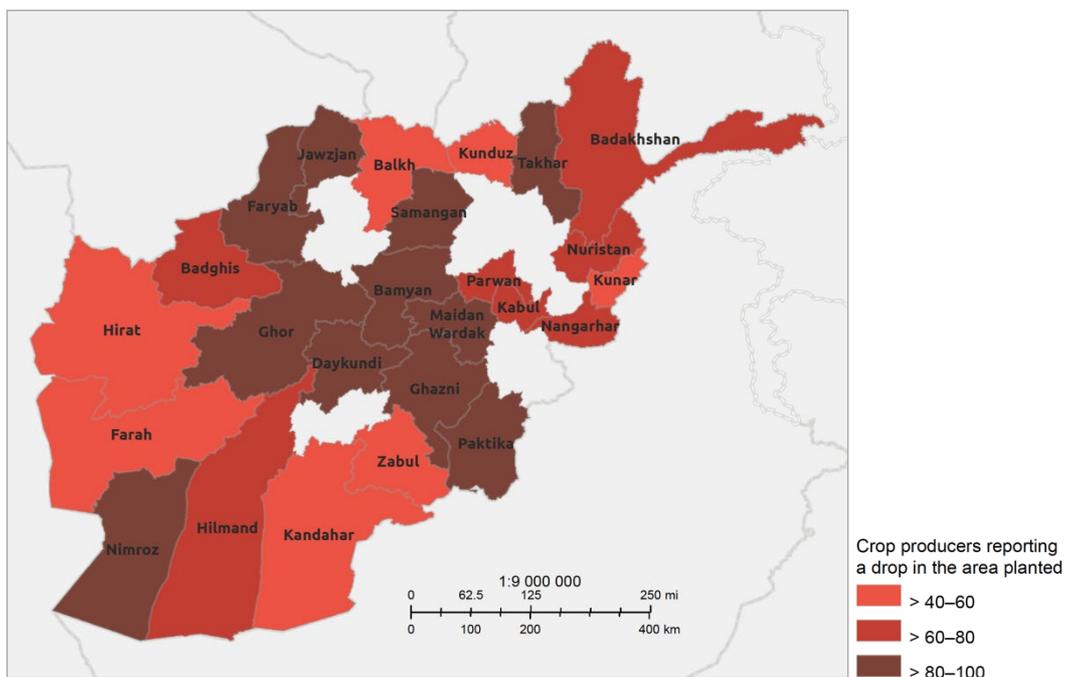
The previous round of data collection in August 2021 found that drought and conflict co-occurred with other shocks, suggesting a compounding effect, thereby households affected by either drought or conflict were more vulnerable to other shocks. This compounding effect was not found in the current round.

Crops

Surveyed farmers indicated a reduction in the area planted compared to the previous round (Figure 3). This is of particular concern in the central provinces and to wheat farmers – 71 percent of whom planted less or a lot less. Compared to the most recent round of data collection in August 2021, more households cited difficulties in accessing inputs (seeds and fertilizer). However, fewer plant diseases, production losses and issues with the quality of seeds were reported. The most frequently cited constraints to crop production were plant diseases, lack of water, and access to fertilizer and seeds. The poor quality of and accessibility to seeds, lack of water, access to pesticides and fuel are associated with the reduction of area planted.

Seventy-four percent of farmers expect a decrease in production compared to a typical year. Of particular concern is the wheat harvest: 79 percent of respondents expect a drop. Only a small minority of farmers (27 percent) sold crops, mostly wheat and potatoes, during the three months preceding the survey. Marketing costs and farm gate prices continue to concern a high share of farmers (74 and 58 percent, respectively), but the percent of households citing other atypical difficulties decreased from the previous round.

Figure 3. Percentage of farmers reporting a decrease in area planted



Source of data: FAO. 2022. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (March–April 2022).

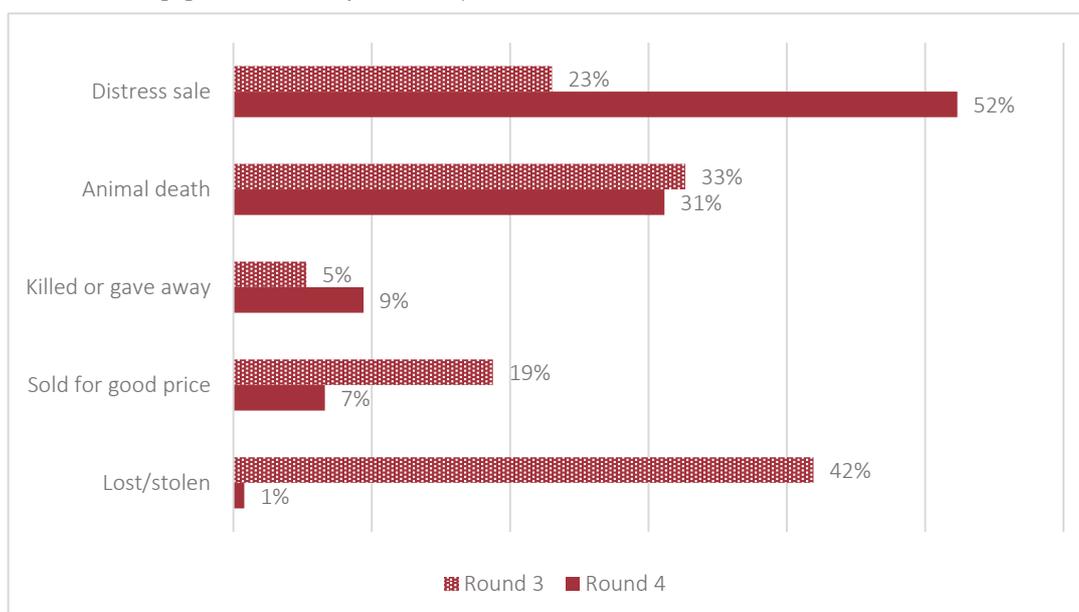
Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. *Map of Afghanistan*. Cited 29 April 2022. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

Livestock

Sixty-three percent of respondents declared that their pastures were in bad condition, particularly in Badghis, Bamyan, Daykundi, Ghazni, Nimroz, Paktika and Wardak. Seventy-three percent of livestock producers decreased their herd size compared to one year ago. This trend was evident in previous rounds, suggesting that herd sizes have decreased to levels that cannot sustain a livelihood based in livestock. Compared to one year ago, cattle herds decreased by three heads, on average, and affected 67 percent of livestock farmers; goat herds decreased by seven heads on average and affected 77 percent of livestock farmers; and sheep herds decreased by 18 heads and affected 83 percent of livestock farmers.

Compared to the previous round, the reasons for variation in herd size have evolved (Figure 4). Despite a significant decrease in livestock losses, distress sales have increased and marketing opportunities have decreased. Respondents reported that the main constraints in livestock production were difficulties purchasing feed (73 percent), animal diseases or death (53 percent), difficulties accessing pasture (43 percent), and veterinary services (42 percent). The most frequent marketing difficulty for cattle was the low selling price (76 percent), and smaller profit share (high marketing/transportation costs) for sheep (64 percent) and goats (63 percent).

Figure 4: Reported reasons for variation in herds compared to the previous round (percentage of households engaged in livestock production)

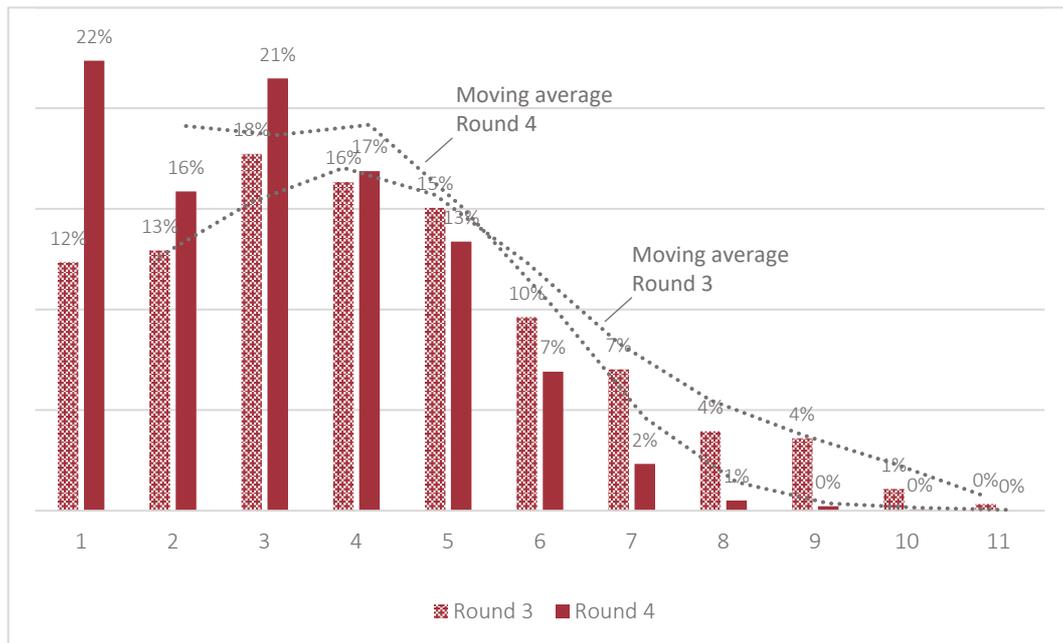


Source of data: FAO. 2022. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (March–April 2022).

Food security

Both the Food Consumption Score (FCS) and the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) indicate food consumption gaps at an aggregate level. The FCS shows that 25 percent of households have acceptable food consumption, 35 percent borderline and 40 percent poor; and the HDDS, when compared to the previous round (August 2021), shows a deterioration of dietary diversity with 38 percent of households who consumed two food groups or less (Figure 5).

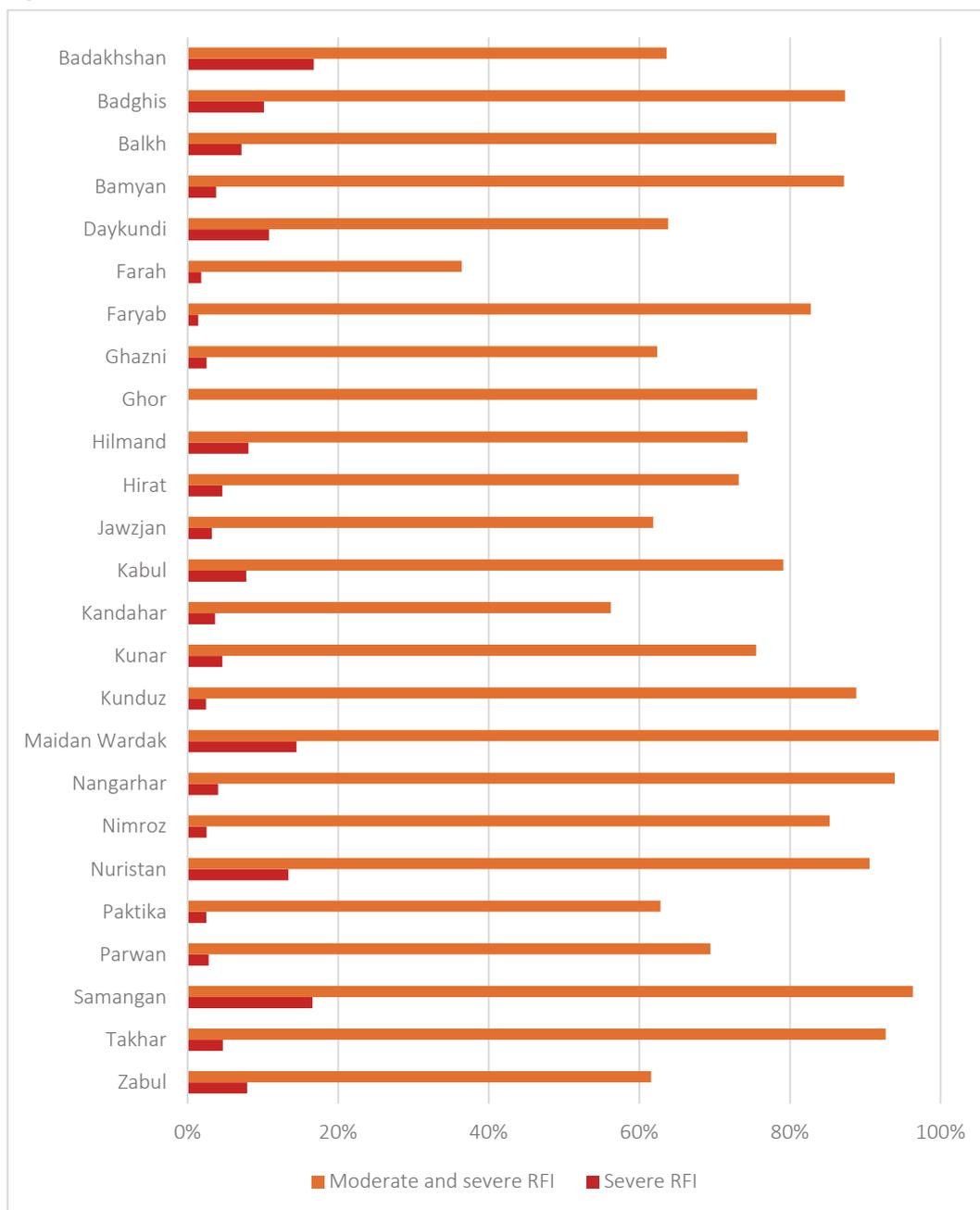
Figure 5. HDDS distribution since the previous round of data collection



Source of data: FAO. 2022. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (March–April 2022).

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) estimates a 76.9 percent prevalence of severe and moderate recent food insecurity (RFI); and 6.1 percent severe RFI for the surveyed provinces. Severe RFI has deteriorated since the last round, from an estimated 3 percent to 6.1 percent. The prevalence of food insecurity was high across all surveyed areas, particularly in Badakhshan, Badghis, Nimroz, Nuristan, Samangan, Tahar, Wardak and Zabul. Non-agricultural households reported a slightly higher prevalence of the worst outcomes. Food consumption gaps were found to be coupled with asset depletion: more than nine out of ten households lost productive assets and could not immediately return to normal livelihoods.

Figure 6: Prevalence of moderate and severe RFI



Source of data: FAO. 2022. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (March–April 2022).

Needs

Ninety-eight percent of surveyed households indicated a need for assistance. The type of assistance varied by household: cash or food assistance were the most frequent needs reported among non-agricultural households; fertilizer, seeds, access to irrigation water and tools were most frequently cited among crop producers; the need for pesticides was reported by both crop producers and livestock herders; and animal feed and veterinary services were the most frequently cited needs by livestock herders.

Recommendations

Reversing the trend of decapitalization and/or losses in agriculture requires targeted actions aimed at sustaining agricultural incomes, in the context of the evolving humanitarian crisis. In particular:

- > Support wheat production with certified seeds, fertilizer and trainings targeting the upcoming season, particularly in Badakhshan, Badghis, Daykundi, Faryab, Kabul, Kunduz, Samangan and Takhar apart from the traditional areas with higher wheat cultivation intensity.
- > Identify suitable areas for off-season farming, in response to the below normal harvest, and to support the summer (June to September) season with short cycle varieties.
- > Support marginal livestock keepers/herders, especially those who have decapitalized, with livestock protection packages including concentrated animal feed, deworming, trainings, and linkages to local extension services.
- > Restock animals before the next lean season in the most affected livestock areas, such as the northern mountain range and the southern provinces.
- > Use and sustain the existing veterinary services, infrastructure and human resources to extend their reach before next winter and organize vaccination and deworming campaigns, and advisory sessions on animal health and nutrition across all provinces particularly Daykundi, Badakhshan, Paktika, Badghis, Kandahar, Kunduz, Faryab, Nimroz, Kunar, Ghor and Nuristan.
- > Diversify rural incomes (more than 90 percent of respondents had only one income source) by diversifying the cropping pattern (e.g. vegetables, hay, fodder), encouraging good practices in herd-size management, promoting agriculture-based income generation activities (e.g. apiculture, backyard poultry, mushroom cultivation, green/poly house, vegetable processing, etc.) and establishing appropriate marketing linkages.
- > Reconstitute productive assets, community assets and safety net interventions through the implementation of cash-for-work activities, cash and voucher assistance, including cash+, to provide income sources for the most vulnerable.

These actions are more likely to be effective through partnerships and coordination with different actors, to ensure:

- > Asset protection, such as food assistance to protect seeds and/or livestock holdings
- > Enhance/rebuild local infrastructure with cash-for-work or food-for-work interventions, for example
- > The timely provision of inputs and other assistance according to the local production calendar



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Contact

FAO Representation in Afghanistan

FAO-AF@fao.org
fao.org/afghanistan | @FAOafghanistan
Kabul, Afghanistan

Office of Emergencies and Resilience

OER-Director@fao.org
fao.org/emergencies | @FAOEmergencies
Rome, Italy

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