

April 2010

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联合国  
粮食及  
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Food  
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Organisation  
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pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## THIRTY-FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Panama City, Panama, 26 to 30 April 2010

### SITUATION IN HAITI, THE PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION: Food Security and Agriculture considerations for future programming

#### CONTEXT FOR RECONSTRUCTION

1. The 12 January 2010 earthquake in Haiti and subsequent aftershocks severely affected the Ouest Province around an epicentre 17km south-west of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, which suffered extensive damage. The earthquake killed over 200 000 people, injured over 300 000 and left over 1.7 million people homeless. More than 600 000 people are now internally displaced, having left Port-au-Prince and moved into rural areas, further straining already vulnerable rural households, including 160 000 people who have moved to the border area with the Dominican Republic. Socio-economic conditions prior to the earthquake were characterized by widespread severe poverty, linked in turn to an environmental context of badly depleted resources, most importantly topsoil, making all rural livelihoods unproductive and precarious. Haiti was already highly food insecure, with nearly 5.4 million people or 60 percent of the population, chronically undernourished. An estimated sixty percent of the population was directly dependent on agriculture for income prior to the earthquake, and 75 percent dependent upon rural livelihoods.
2. High food prices in 2008 resulted in civil unrest. The situation was aggravated by three hurricanes and a tropical storm. The earthquake has thus severely exacerbated already high levels of vulnerability. The worst hit areas included *Port-au-Prince*, *Carrefour*, *Leogane*, *Delma* and *Jacmel*, with the outflow of people from Port-au-Prince combined with damage to national infrastructure, having had a demonstrably adverse impact on lives and livelihoods across large areas of the country.
3. Moreover, the effects of the earthquake on the nation's capital created an unprecedented crisis, affecting the most populated areas, as well as the administrative and economic centre of the country.<sup>1</sup> According to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), the total value of damage and losses caused by the earthquake has been estimated at nearly US\$ eight billion, 120 percent more than the 2009 gross domestic product, marking the first time in nearly four decades that cost of a disaster has been so high relative to the size of a national economy. The Government of Haiti and the international community have noted that the crisis was made all the more tragic given the

<sup>1</sup> Haiti Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) 2010, prepared by the Government of Haiti with the support of the international community.

emerging sense of stability, economic growth, better living conditions and improved agricultural production post-2008 hurricane season.

4. For rural areas, although some housing, irrigation systems, storage facilities were lost or damaged in the areas around and close to the epicentre, the most significant impact has been the movement of urban populations into rural communities.<sup>2</sup> These internally displaced populations have placed significant burdens on host families and communities. Local populations have adopted extreme measures to cope with the crisis, including consuming seed and food reserves, exhausting household cash savings and stripping assets. This will constrain the ability of households to purchase inputs for the next cropping season, creating the potential for a vicious circle of reduced food production, reduced cash income and increased food insecurity.

5. The collapse of agricultural input and output markets due to the crisis will certainly hinder short to medium term recovery. In both rain-fed and irrigated areas, assessments with farm households, market intermediaries and retailers, indicated significant disruptions in agricultural markets. Field work indicated 10-30 percent declines in farm gate prices in the three to four weeks after the earthquake, and 20-40 percent decline in demand. For agricultural households, many farmers in the highly productive irrigated plains were unable to sell their produce in traditional markets post-earthquake. Lower food production, falling agricultural incomes and reduced availability of food have resulted in tightened agricultural output markets. These pressures will continue to stress agricultural livelihoods, in particular those of the poorest rural households.

6. The purpose of this paper is to: (1) provide an overview of the immediate response and Plan of Action of the Rome-based agencies; (2) discuss how agriculture and rural development are expected to play a key role in the reconstruction of Haiti and (3) highlight key points for consideration by Member countries related to the implementation of projects and programmes focused on food security and agriculture.

### **(1) Overview of the immediate response and Plan of Action of the Rome-based agencies**

7. The overall objective of the Plan of Action of the Rome-based agencies over the next 12 months is to ensure that food security is safeguarded on an increasingly sustainable basis in Haiti post-earthquake. The three Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP) convened a Task Force in February 2010 to support the Government of Haiti in food security and related agriculture interventions.<sup>3</sup> The combined effort was announced at the High-level Meeting held in Rome on the 12 February together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development for Haiti. Initial efforts in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake focused on emergency activities related to logistical support, food aid, replacement of assets to restore and increase national food production, enhance access to food, generate employment and prevent further deterioration of food security. The specific food security and nutrition plan for Haiti includes five key areas of support: (i) *short-term humanitarian aid intervention (food distribution to 2.5 to 3 million people in 2010)*; (ii) *national nutrition programme to prevent malnutrition*; (iii) *improved household food security (programmes aimed at watershed management and reforestation)*; (iv) *risk reduction and risk management (early warning, decentralized stocks and warehouse facilities)*; (v) *plus enhanced national policies and institutions (legal framework for food quality and capacity development)*.

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<sup>2</sup> FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture reactivated the Agriculture Cluster to coordinate efforts to provide assistance to farmers and rural families and support local food production post-earthquake. FAO leads the Cluster, which draws participants from more than 90 organizations, including government agencies, donors, UN partners, ICRC/IFRC and NGOs.

<sup>3</sup> Rome-based Agencies Immediate Plan of Action (FAO-IFAD-WFP), 26 February 2010.

8. The Rome-based agencies have continued to deepen their collaboration since the formation of the Task Force in February, particularly through support to operations and projects in the field.<sup>4</sup> A range of measures by all three agencies are aimed at safeguarding and improving food security, including: *meeting food needs and increasing household consumption; helping restore key rural infrastructure and rural livelihoods; boosting support to ongoing country programmes; focusing on rural employment; calling for extensive debt relief; distributing seed and planting material to targeted areas and households; launching programmes to replace and rehabilitate agricultural infrastructure while simultaneously increasing food access through market recovery; targeting agricultural input support to urban and peri-urban households to increase food self-sufficiency; and enhancing the coordination of agencies supporting agricultural and food security recovery.* All three agencies, together with UNICEF, are currently discussing ways forward in terms of launching the Food Security Cluster in Haiti that will be co-chaired by FAO and WFP and will focus on issues related to food aid, nutrition, agriculture and food production.

9. The expected outcomes of these interventions are improved food availability and food access due to increased agricultural production by vulnerable rural households, urban families that have lost their incomes and sources of livelihoods, and newly vulnerable people. New employment opportunities in rural areas will help prevent asset stripping (of animals, tools, land, trees) and protect natural resources, plus reduce the burden of displaced populations on host communities in rural areas. Increased food production will reduce the risk of long-term food aid dependency and should ease food prices in local markets, which in turn, will improve access to food for food insecure households. In addition, urban households whose livelihoods have been seriously disrupted by the earthquake will have improved access to nutritious vegetables produced by urban gardening initiatives that will provide micronutrient rich fresh vegetables and sources of income for beneficiary households.

10. The need to further integrate humanitarian assistance with medium and longer term structural interventions in food security and agriculture has been clear from the onset of the crisis, and there are examples of new types of programming modalities that bridge relief and development goals, aligned with the special emphasis on agriculture, risk reduction and climate change adaptation.<sup>5</sup> The Rome-based agencies will ensure that the unique expertise and contributions of each organization are integrated throughout the emergency relief, recovery and development continuum to safeguard and support national food security objectives.

## **(2) Rural development and agriculture will play key roles in reconstruction**

11. The *International Donors Conference: Towards a New Future for Haiti*, held in New York on 31 March 2010, demonstrated the global commitment to the short, medium and long term success of reconstruction in Haiti. Special emphasis was placed on agriculture as an essential component of recovery, as highlighted in the Plan of Action of the Government of Haiti,

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<sup>4</sup> For example, IFAD agreed to reallocate part of the current project portfolio (totaling US\$1.5 million to date) for FAO emergency response in support of earthquake relief efforts. These funds are being utilized for immediate assistance in the North East, North West and Centre Departments of Haiti. Furthermore, WFP as the lead on the Logistics Cluster, continues to support FAO through the storage and transportation of agricultural inputs and plays a critical role in terms of transport between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Delivery of needed agricultural inputs between the department and local community levels has been jointly undertaken by FAO and other Agriculture Cluster partners.

<sup>5</sup> See for example, *FAO Global Environmental Facility Project: Strengthening Climate Resilience and Reducing Disaster Risk in Agriculture to Improve Food Security in Haiti post-Earthquake*

discussed at the donor conference. The Conference generated pledges of more than US\$ nine billion to support reconstruction, social services, governance, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. The aims of the Government and international community for food and agriculture post-earthquake are clear: *to rebuild the agricultural sector; support economic growth in rural areas; safeguard and improve food security; and create employment and livelihood opportunities for rural populations and internally displaced people.*

12. One of the primary objectives of the reconstruction strategy is to develop networks of smaller urban and rural growth poles, outside of Port-au-Prince, focused on agriculture, tourism, industry and employment. The rural growth pole concept in turn implies a need to strengthen community level resilience and develop capacity to make linkages between actions and policy between local and national governing platforms. Given that the majority of Haitian women are members of grassroots communities, identifying ways to ensure that their voices and perspectives are integrated into interventions in support of the national Plan of Action is central to the success of the growth pole approach.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, women have tended to play a key role in domestic marketing and the transformation of household agricultural produce.<sup>7</sup> Greater focus on analysis of the gender-differentiated needs and division of labor between men and women of all ages in Haiti in food and agriculture may contribute to restoring agricultural production, value-chain addition and market recovery.

13. FAO has identified three pillars to ensure agricultural recovery in Haiti: (1) rural infrastructure and local development (watershed management, reforestation, irrigation and feeder roads, land tenure); (2) production and value chain development (focusing on livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, trade, urban and peri-urban agriculture, staple crops productivity, seed multiplication, improved access and distribution of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, tools, post-harvest infrastructure, and promotion of local purchases with WFP) and (3) agricultural services (research and extension, rural credit with Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura, institutional strengthening). The Government of Haiti, through the Post Disaster Needs Assessment, has also called for developing sector capacity to reduce and manage the risk of disasters.

### **(3) Key points for consideration by Member countries related to guidance for the implementation of projects and programmes in food and agriculture**

14. Member countries have clearly acknowledged the need for enhanced cooperation to support the reconstruction of Haiti post-earthquake. And, while the need to sustain commitment to the humanitarian imperative is essential, short-term relief interventions are often less focused on promoting community-based measures such as risk reduction to strengthen resilience to shocks. There is a great need for a more proactive approach to interventions that will help Haiti reduce risk through preparedness, early warning, contingency planning, prevention and mitigation measures. Furthermore, the earthquake caused the loss of the Cartographic Centre, a significant source of information on food and agriculture. Immediate support to the remaining existing centres and institutes linked with early warning and early action, such as CNSA<sup>8</sup> and FEWS NET<sup>9</sup>, is critical.

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<sup>6</sup> Main Recommendations: Gender Shadow Report on Haiti Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, March 2010

<sup>7</sup> Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, January 2008, Background document, Agenda Item 3, Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies

<sup>8</sup> *Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire*

<sup>9</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network

15. Haiti had an extremely degraded natural environment even prior to the earthquake, characterized by stressed watersheds and deforestation that have contributed to acute poverty and contributed to a largely subsistence economy. Considered a disaster hotspot given the range of risk and hazard exposure, Haiti is particularly vulnerable to floods, hurricanes and landslides that have significantly adverse impacts on agricultural production, leading to soil erosion and increasingly higher levels of aridity and salinity of soils. Every other year, the people of Haiti face cyclones, storms or tropical depressions that typically constitute the most fatal and devastating of natural disasters. More than 96 percent of all Haitians live under the constant risk of two or more hazards, and Haiti is increasingly considered as one of the most vulnerable countries to the adverse consequences of climate variability and change.<sup>10</sup> Small farmers and rural households are especially vulnerable in the aftermath of the earthquake due to pre-existing food insecurity and the strain due to the rapid increase in household size due to movements of the displaced to rural areas, and limited and increasingly exhausted coping strategies.

16. Reviving and contributing to a sustainable intensification of agricultural production to improve food security is a priority of the Government of Haiti and international community.<sup>11</sup> Given that vulnerabilities in the agricultural sector were closely linked to water and soil conservation even prior to the earthquake, a successful long-term agriculture rehabilitation process will need to analyze the causal factors of risk, identify and prepare for hazard exposure and develop capacities to reduce future hazard exposure and the impacts expected from increased climate variability. For Haiti, a multi-hazard approach that integrates risk reduction and good adaptation practices is necessary due to the wide range of hazard risk exposure. FAO has been working along these lines over the past years, both through emergency projects assisting farmers in need and preparing for the hurricane seasons and through development projects building on participatory approaches for watershed management.

17. Member countries may wish to consider projects and programmes focused on reconstruction post-earthquake that:

- *identify and ensure greater coherence between emergency, recovery and development activities, programmes and processes;*
- *develop rural infrastructure and promote local development through watershed management, reforestation, orchard and pasture development, irrigation, feeder roads and land tenure;*
- *focus on production and value chains in livestock, dairy and poultry, fisheries and aquaculture, trade, staple crops (agricultural inputs and equipment), urban and peri-urban agriculture,*
- *provide capacity development in agricultural services such as research and extension, rural credit and institutional strengthening;*
- *promote the adoption of seed varieties resistant to local pests and diseases, as well as short cycle varieties;*
- *prepare strategic seed reserves at national, departmental and commune level and develop seed multiplication programmes with selected farmer associations that can reinforce and strengthen commercial seed markets;*
- *support the development of a major water harvesting initiative in rural areas;*

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<sup>10</sup> Haiti PDNA 2010

<sup>11</sup> MARNDR: Programme spécial d'appui à la production alimentaire en Haïti en réponse aux quatre cyclones de l'été 2008, au tremblement de terre du 12 janvier 2010 et à l'intégration des populations déplacées. Port-au-Prince, janvier 2010.

- *increase the visibility and strengthen the capacity and participation of female leaders and women's civil society organizations in recovery and reconstruction in food and agriculture sectors<sup>12</sup>;*
- *promote and strengthen South-South Cooperation amongst countries in the region and Haiti, particularly given the scope of available technical expertise in agriculture;*
- *accelerate national work on disaster risk reduction and risk management in the food and agriculture sectors, and focus on capacity development through knowledge transfer that reduces exposure to natural and human-induced risks, particularly at community level;*
- *support the national disaster risk management system and further develop capacity to integrate technical knowledge and expertise into disaster risk preparedness and response measures in food and agriculture;*
- *focus on analysis of the causal links between disaster risk and underdevelopment in agriculture, identifying the most effective interventions to support sustainable intensification of agricultural production in Haiti.*

18. There is a need for additional immediate support to agriculture, particularly before the start of the hurricane season in June, and the start of the smaller second planting season in July. Without expressed financial commitment to the needs identified in the National Plan of Action, the prospects for *building back better* and longer term recovery in agriculture are weakened. The special emphasis placed on agriculture, as called for in the Plan of Action of the Government of Haiti, and supported by the international community, is significant. FAO is ready to work with Members and partners to ensure that reconstruction in Haiti results in improved food security, recovery in agriculture, and that the people of Haiti are better prepared and have strengthened the resilience of their communities to address the impact of disasters, threats and emergencies in food and agriculture.

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<sup>12</sup> Gender Shadow Report on Haiti Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, March 2010