

Nepal

Background

Nepal suffers from chronic food insecurity, severe and recurrent natural disasters, poor health and sanitation infrastructure, and water and energy scarcity. These factors combined with political instability and civil unrest result in a dire humanitarian situation for Nepal's already vulnerable population. The country's long-running civil conflict (1996-2006) severely outstretched the coping mechanisms of affected families. Additional external shocks, such as floods, droughts, pandemics or rising food prices, could have catastrophic consequences for Nepal if support mechanisms are not provided.

Currently, 3.4 million people in Nepal are highly to severely food insecure and approximately 28 000 children under the age of five die each year from easily preventable illnesses. Over 50 percent of districts are food-deficit and nearly one-quarter of the population lives on less than USD 1 per day. The cost of staple food items in Nepal today is as high or higher than at the peak of the international food crisis in August 2008. However, Government expenditure on agriculture has fallen to just 5 percent of the 2008 budget. Further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis, political instability has disrupted governmental proceedings and limited investment, job creation and exports, while continued strikes have impacted the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for over three-quarters of the population, including many subsistence farmers. Nepal's decade-long conflict caused the collapse of the sector as it destroyed rural infrastructure, disrupted storage, transportation and market access, depleted food and seed stocks, and affected livestock production capacity and animal health services. Over the past three years, a further five million people have fallen below the poverty line as a result of high food prices and low crop yields. As compared with price levels in August 2008, the costs of food items such as lentil and black gram have increased by 35 percent and 23 percent, respectively. Families are spending over 70 percent of their income to purchase food.

Nepalese farmers have difficulty in accessing basic agricultural inputs due to their high costs, limited local seed production capacity and poor road networks, especially in remote areas. The lack of quality seeds, fertilizers and agricultural machinery results in an average per hectare yield of rice, wheat, maize and pulses – Nepal's staple crops – that is significantly lower than that of neighbouring countries. An increased frequency of floods, droughts and hail storms has further impacted crop production. Most recently, the 2008/09 winter drought resulted in a 14.5 percent and 17.3 percent decrease in barley and wheat production, respectively, as



FAO plans to deliver quality cereal and vegetable seeds to farmers in time for the summer and winter planting seasons.

compared with the previous year. Lack of fodder and access to veterinary services, combined with animal disease outbreaks, continually threaten the food security of families dependent on livestock, a valuable livelihood asset for rural communities, especially the landless.

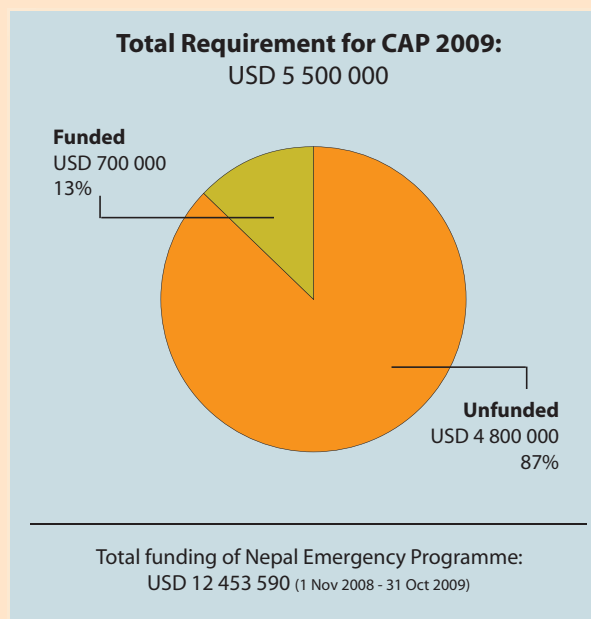
FAO's response

FAO has been working with local government partners, community-based organizations (CBOs), farmers and herders in Nepal for over five decades. The Organization's proposed assistance through the 2010 Nepal Humanitarian Transition Appeal will address the most critical needs of rural families affected by conflict, soaring food costs and natural disasters, enabling them to improve food security, nutritional practices and resilience to future shocks.

With donor support, FAO will strengthen the resilience of farmers to the increasing occurrence of drought, particularly in areas such as the Mid- and Far-Western Regions. Funding will enable quality cereal and vegetable seeds to reach farmers in time for the summer and winter planting seasons. FAO will provide seeds that are drought-tolerant and require shorter growing periods to maximize production in the event of limited rainfall. Beneficiaries' yields will also be enhanced through the promotion of crop diversification, small-scale irrigation and water-harvesting technology, soil management and moisture conservation practices.

The development of school and homestead vegetable gardens and hands-on training in better nutritional practices, food preparation and dietary diversification will improve nutrition among vulnerable households. Focus will also lie in protecting and strengthening the livelihoods of families dependent on livestock through the provision of small ruminant animals and poultry, materials for animal shelters, animal feed, seeds to produce fodder, and veterinary supplies and services. Capacity building at institutional level will also improve support and extension services across the sector.

As part of the Food Security Cluster, FAO is leading the subcluster for agriculture. Strengthening the coordination of agricultural activities in Nepal will be crucial to ensuring that the response of humanitarian partners is effective, avoids duplication, optimizes the use of funding and reaches communities most in need.



PROPOSALS: FAO EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

Total funding requested: USD 11 431 850

Improvement of the food security and nutrition status of vulnerable families of the Mid-Western Region of Nepal through enhanced dietary diversity and better nutritional and agricultural practices	
Objectives:	To improve the nutrition knowledge of vulnerable populations through the adoption of better dietary and feeding practices and development of homestead vegetable gardens.
Activities:	Build the capacity of local NGO staff and District Agriculture Development Office staff on vegetable production through home and school gardens, including the production and dissemination of farmer-oriented training material; provide training to community workers on improved food practices for better nutrition; promote home-based vegetable production through the establishment of home gardens and school gardens; support and promote home-based poultry rearing; provide training to beneficiaries on basic nutrition principles, vegetable production and small livestock rearing; develop and disseminate nutrition information and communication materials for community workers and project beneficiaries; and carry out monitoring and beneficiary results assessment.
Beneficiaries:	84 000 households, with priority dedicated to women heads of households, other women at risk of malnutrition, and malnourished children under the age of five (42 000 children and 5 880 women).
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Health and Population, national and international NGOs and institutions, and community partners.
Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 1 000 000.

Immediate rehabilitation of agriculture-based livelihoods and restoration of food and nutrition security in the drought-affected districts in the Far-Western and Mid-Western Development Regions of Nepal

Objectives:	To increase the resilience of beneficiary households to drought and enhance the level of food security and nutrition status of beneficiaries through improved livestock and crop production.
Activities:	Conduct a detailed, area-specific needs assessment in collaboration with Government line agencies and other relevant UN agencies to identify the most vulnerable Village Development Committees (VDCs) and households affected by drought and their immediate priorities; provide immediate agricultural input assistance (e.g. improved cereal and vegetable seeds, construction materials for water harvesting structures, input packages for the installation of micro-irrigation units, etc.) and related training; promote simple agricultural practices for crop and soil management to conserve soil moisture and increase soil fertility; provide training on post-harvest and food preservation techniques to prolong the shelf-life and availability of food stocks; and facilitate capacity building initiatives at community level with the participation of Government institutions and main humanitarian and development actors on management strategies for local water resources (e.g. watershed management, water distribution management, crops management for water conservation and management of drainage waters).
Beneficiaries:	100 800 drought-affected farmers and their food insecure families (7 056 children under the age of five and 50 600 women).
Implementing partners:	National and international NGOs, national institutions and national academic institutions.
Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 2 700 000.

Immediate assistance to improve the nutrition and food security of vulnerable communities in the conflict-affected districts of Rukum, Rolpa, Jajarkot, Salyan, Pyuthan and Gorkha

Objectives:	To enhance the household-level food security and nutrition status of beneficiaries through the resumption of crop production and rehabilitation of community-based irrigation systems.
Activities:	Distribute improved varieties of cereal seeds (wheat, rice, millet and maize) and vegetable seeds (over 15 different species for winter and summer seasons); provide small livestock ruminants and poultry, animal shelter materials and veterinary supplies for the rearing of small livestock and poultry production; build the capacity of local District Agriculture Development Offices and District Livestock Services Offices for the provision of better extension services; rehabilitate and develop small irrigation infrastructure; create awareness on nutritional issues through training and other community-based activities; and provide training to farmers on agricultural production and livestock rearing.
Beneficiaries:	92 500 conflict-affected farmers and their food insecure families (47 600 children).
Implementing partners:	Local NGOs, including CCF Nepal, Dalit Development Society, Five Star Youth Samrakshyab Manch, Himalayan Youth Club Nepal, Mallarani Rural Development Concern Center, Kalika Development Center, Integrated Development Center and HURED-KARS, among others.
Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 1 700 000.

Cluster-based coordination of agricultural emergency and rehabilitation assistance in Nepal	
Objectives:	To improve the coordination of emergency and rehabilitation interventions in the agriculture sector (encompassing the crop, fisheries, livestock and forestry subsectors) through the cluster approach, avoiding duplication and gaps, optimizing funds utilization and promoting synergies of programmes among partners.
Activities:	Strengthen the agriculture subcluster at central and regional levels within the Food Security Cluster; prepare an action plan for the agriculture subcluster at central and regional levels; provide technical guidance to the cluster members; develop common tools for monitoring and results assessment; develop best-practices guidelines for emergency and rehabilitation interventions and for disaster preparedness and disaster risk management in the agriculture sector; improve advocacy for emergency, rehabilitation and disaster prevention interventions for the sector; establish clear links between emergency and rehabilitation interventions and longer-term development actions addressing food security and agriculture-based livelihoods; enhance the “who is doing what and where” (3W matrix) information system for the agriculture sector with the intent of avoiding gaps and duplication of efforts; and enhance inter- and intra-cluster linkages and coordination.
Beneficiaries:	All partners engaged in agricultural livelihoods recovery, including concerned ministries and line departments of the Government, donors, UN partners, NGOs and CBOs. Vulnerable rural households (e.g. victims of high agricultural input and food prices, drought and floods) will benefit from more coordinated humanitarian assistance.
Implementing partners:	National and international NGOs and institutions.
Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 531 850.

Support to mitigate the negative effects of high food prices on local rural populations in ten districts in the Eastern, Central, Mid-Western and Far-Western Regions of Nepal

Objectives:	To enhance the food security of 100 000 farmers and mitigate the effects of soaring food prices through the provision of improved quality seeds of staple crops (cereals), vegetables and pulses, fertilizers and training; and to reinforce the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and especially its extension services, to improve their food security and nutrition monitoring capabilities.
Activities:	Finalize target areas in cooperation with the Government and WFP based on district- and VDC-level analysis, using food availability and vulnerability mapping; identify and select implementing partners; develop beneficiary selection criteria in consultation with key partners and stakeholders; procure and carry out quality inspection of assorted seed inputs and fertilizers for two cropping seasons; distribute agricultural input packages to 70 000 extremely vulnerable farmers to enable them to boost production; distribute vegetable seed packages to 30 000 extremely vulnerable farmers; carry out stakeholder consultation for the mapping of training curriculum and preparation of training material; recruit and train 25 master trainers; mobilize 40 Ministry staff and 147 CBO representatives for training of trainers; implement a training programme for 26 700 farmer trainees; and build the capacity of the Ministry to monitor and analyse food security by institutionalizing the WFP Food Security Monitoring Analysis System.
Beneficiaries:	100 000 farmers affected by the soaring food price crisis (including 10 000 children and 50 000 women).
Implementing partners:	WFP, international and national NGOs, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and other relevant Government line ministries and academic institutions.
Duration:	January – December 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 5 500 000.

“Reports indicate that up to 1.55 million individuals are currently internally displaced”

