

Introduction

FAO's role in emergencies

Some 75 percent of the poorest people in the developing world depend on agriculture for their way of life. They rely on farming, fishing, livestock-raising and forest-based resources to feed themselves, their families and their communities. It is a precarious existence. During conflict or when a disaster strikes, these people are often the worst affected. Supporting agriculture is therefore an integral part of overall humanitarian assistance.

Major donors from Nov 2007 to Oct 2008

FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme

USD (million)

European Commission	61.6
United States	59.8
UN Central Emergency Response Fund (OCHA)	43.9
Sweden	29.5
UN Trust Fund – Sudan	16.2
Spain	13.9
UN Trust Fund – Iraq	12.4
Italy	11.5
Netherlands	11.1
Belgium	10.6
Haiti (Unilateral Trust Fund – IFAD loan)	10.2
United Kingdom	9.2
World Bank	8.8
Norway	8.5
UN Trust Fund – the Democratic Republic of the Congo	7.1
Tajikistan (Unilateral Trust Fund – World Bank grant)	5.0
France	4.0
Switzerland	3.2

Note: UN contributions represent multi-donor pooled funding.

Within the United Nations (UN) system, FAO is the lead agency for agriculture and promotes a sustainable approach to food security. In response to emergencies, FAO protects and rebuilds agricultural livelihoods with the aim of restoring local food production and bolstering self-reliance. This approach provides an exit from food aid and other forms of costly assistance and reduces the adoption of harmful coping strategies such as selling assets, migration and forced and/or abusive labour.

In concert with other UN agencies, humanitarian partners and governments, FAO undertakes rapid needs assessments, formulates response strategies, and manages agricultural protection and recovery programmes.

FAO's emergency activities include the distribution of material assets, such as seeds, fishing equipment, veterinary medicines, livestock and tools, as well as repairs to vital agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation systems.

FAO also offers more specialized assistance such as emergency seed multiplication, training of community animal health workers (CAHWs) to save livestock and control diseases, educating AIDS orphans in farming techniques and other initiatives to foster resilience and improve food security. These programmes build on the knowledge and skills of vulnerable people so they are able to cope better with future shocks. The goal is to increase self-reliance and lay the foundation for recovery.

FAO is also a trusted source of information on agriculture, food security and nutrition and provides partners with technical and coordination assistance.

