

West Africa

Background

Much of the population of West Africa suffers from poverty. Many people who are not officially classified as poor are only slightly above the absolute poverty line. In 2008, agricultural output was lower than anticipated for the second consecutive year. The agricultural livelihoods of many vulnerable households have also been impacted by rising commodity prices, displacement, disease epidemics and natural disasters.

Several West African nations are facing protracted refugee crises, though progress in reaching resolutions has been achieved in many cases. More than 200 000 refugees are currently being hosted throughout the region, most of whom are native to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Togo. Thousands of refugees have returned to their homelands in 2008, a trend which is expected to continue in 2009. Furthermore, the people of West Africa have recently been confronted with outbreaks of meningitis, sporadic yellow fever and cholera. Agricultural livelihoods have also been consistently affected by recurring floods and drought.

KEY FACTS

- Population: 250 million
- Countries covered in the West Africa CAP are:
Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire,
Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau,
Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger,
Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo

(Source: UN; World Bank; World Factbook)

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

According to regional estimates, cereal production for the 2007/08 agricultural season was 1.6 million tonnes lower than the previous year. Cash crop production, particularly cotton and groundnuts, was also less than in the previous season. These production deficits, coupled with the global trends of soaring prices of food and fuel in 2008, have led to sharp price increases for locally produced cereals and imported commodities.

As prices escalate beyond their reach, people who are dependent on markets for access to food face further reductions in purchasing power. Urban and peri-urban areas are particularly hard hit, as demonstrated by recent protests in several cities across West Africa. Coastal communities that are dependant on imports for the bulk of their cereal supply are also suffering negative impacts of increased grain prices. In particular, prices for imported rice have risen throughout the region, as older and cheaper stocks are consumed and available supplies are less able to fulfil local demands.

In many areas across West Africa, food security and nutrition will deteriorate as stocks will be depleted in the coming months and the crops are not yet ready to be harvested. Rural populations are expected to benefit from their upcoming harvests and milk production, though needs in urban areas may remain high for a longer period as people adapt their coping mechanisms to the context of higher prices. Damage to infrastructure caused by recurring floods has also disrupted the transportation of goods to markets, which may lead to further increases in prices at local levels.

FAO response

In 2009, FAO will reinforce support to food security analyses at national and regional levels. Regional-level assistance will include coordinated food security assessments, demand-driven support to methodological developments and the identification of action for rapid responses to severe food insecurity crises. Country-specific response plans will provide seeds, fertilizer, tools and animal production inputs to vulnerable households identified through the comprehensive assessments.

FAO aims to enhance crop production in the following year through the provision of agricultural inputs to selected beneficiaries in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and Togo. Project activities in Mauritania will also include the reactivation of seed banks and the provision of phytosanitary products. Additional agricultural assistance provided to the Niger will include the construction of wells and irrigation systems, as well as the development of fire breaks. Furthermore, training in improved crop production techniques will be provided through the proposed projects.

Livestock assistance will also be provided in selected areas. Beneficiaries in Burkina Faso will be assisted through the provision of ruminants for reproduction, as well as feed and sanitary products. In Togo, FAO's intervention will include the vaccination of birds against Newcastle disease, as well as training and awareness raising about the disease.

Anti-parasites, mineral additives and multivitamins will be distributed to livestock owners in Mauritania, whereas animal feed and veterinary supplies will be provided to beneficiaries in Senegal.

Project activities in Liberia will establish a small-scale pilot poultry feed production unit, as well as facilitate the construction of poultry shelters. Livestock owners in the Niger will benefit from small ruminant restocking, improved sanitation and the establishment of animal feed shops.

“Over 200 000 refugees are currently being hosted throughout the region”



PROPOSALS: FAO EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

Total funding required: USD 37 790 794

BURKINA FASO – Emergency assistance to affected vulnerable farmers at risk of malnutrition and victims of high food prices and climatic hazards	
Objectives:	To assist rural and urban families at risk of malnutrition by improving the productive capacity of farmers and increasing food availability in the country.
Activities:	Provide quality potato and vegetable seeds, as well as related tools and fertilizers; distribute seed kits of maize, sorghum and millet, together with fertilizer and pesticides; supply small ruminants for reproduction, as well as feed and sanitary products; assess vulnerability throughout the country; and conduct training in agricultural production, processing, marketing and nutritional education.
Beneficiaries:	80 000 households.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulic and Fisheries Resources, WFP, UNICEF, Red Cross, OCADES, ACF, Christian Aid and Africare.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 7 986 000.

GUINEA – Emergency agricultural assistance to vulnerable populations affected by the food crisis and strengthening of FAO's emergency coordination and food security analysis capacity	
Objectives:	To improve household food security, nutrition and coordination of agricultural emergency response.
Activities:	Conduct needs assessments and identify beneficiaries; provide key agricultural inputs and technical assistance; train beneficiaries on improved and sustainable agricultural practices; chair the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster meetings; coordinate and monitor emergency interventions pertaining to the agriculture sector; and collect and disseminate information on the food security and vulnerability situation.
Beneficiaries:	75 000 small-scale vulnerable farming households.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs and CRDs.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 1 991 994.

LIBERIA – Emergency assistance to improve urban and peri-urban vegetable and egg production

Objectives:	To protect those most vulnerable to food price shocks from nutritional deprivation resulting in acute malnutrition and loss of livelihoods through improved vegetable and egg production for a better balanced diet.
Activities:	Identify implementing partners and beneficiaries; procure, transport and distribute inputs; set up small-scale pilot poultry feed production units; facilitate construction of poultry houses; provide technical support and training to implementing partners and women groups; carry out monitoring and evaluation activities; and coordinate with actors in the Food Security and Nutrition sector.
Beneficiaries:	12 500 vulnerable urban/peri-urban households, with an emphasis on female-headed households and children under the age of five.
Implementing partners:	NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 3 207 382.

LIBERIA – Emergency assistance to protect and increase rice production of food-insecure smallholder farmers

Objectives:	To protect those most vulnerable to food price shocks from nutritional deprivation, resulting in acute malnutrition and loss of livelihoods, by increasing rice production in uplands and swamps.
Activities:	Distribute improved seed varieties and fertilizers; provide enhanced crop husbandry techniques and improved pest management practices; and link with WFP's activities and P4P project.
Beneficiaries:	22 500 smallholder farmers with a particular emphasis on vulnerable female-headed households.
Implementing partners:	National and international NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 4 901 778.

MAURITANIA – Emergency assistance to vulnerable farmers and livestock breeders affected by the rising food prices and climatic hazards

Objectives:	To provide necessary inputs to enhance agricultural and livestock production and increase incomes of vulnerable farmers and livestock herders.
Activities:	Provide phytosanitary products and sorghum seeds to farmers; set up horticultural perimeters; reactivate seed banks in areas with limited infrastructure; distribute mineral additives, multivitamins and anti-parasites to herders; and reinforce operational monitoring and evaluation committees at national and local levels.
Beneficiaries:	25 000 households.
Implementing partners:	MDR and NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 962 500.

THE NIGER – Emergency assistance to reduce the impact of rising prices and strengthen sustainable livelihoods of food-insecure populations

Objectives:	To improve food supply and adjustment capacity of vulnerable households facing rising food and agricultural input prices in the most vulnerable areas of the Niger by supporting cereal production and family gardens.
Activities:	Provide seeds, fertilizers and pesticides; rehabilitate market gardens; construct borehole wells and irrigation networks; and train and advise field workers and beneficiaries.
Beneficiaries:	105 000 vulnerable households, including 404 250 women and 15 000 schoolchildren.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, WFP, UNICEF, ACF-E, Oxfam GB, CRS, Africare, Goal, Save the Children-UK, AMURT International and national-level projects.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 3 844 500.

THE NIGER – Emergency assistance to the rehabilitation of sustainable livelihoods of vulnerable pastoralist households

Objectives:	To protect small stockbreeders' animals in order to consolidate household safety nets by creating animal feed shops, protecting pastures and establishing a community animal health system.
Activities:	Supply small ruminants for restocking; develop firebreaks to protect pastures; set up animal feed shops; and develop community animal health networks.
Beneficiaries:	306 000 pastoralist and agropastoralist households.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Animal Resources, local and international NGOs and pastoralist associations.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 4 092 000.

SENEGAL – Emergency assistance to vulnerable households at risk of food insecurity and/or malnutrition affected by soaring food prices and climatic hazards

Objectives:	To protect, restore and strengthen the livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural, peri-urban and urban households by increasing revenue and improving production of farmers and herders.
Activities:	Expand dry-season gardening activities to increase revenues of women and youth vegetable producer groups; support livestock production for vulnerable households; and provide seeds and fertilizer to improve preparation for the rainfed agricultural campaign.
Beneficiaries:	75 000 households, including women who are in a state of food insecurity, pregnant or lactating, as well as youths and children who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition.
Implementing partners:	Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock, Women, Family and Micro-enterprise, as well as international and local NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 4 400 000.

TOGO – Reduce the impact of rising prices and strengthen sustainable livelihoods of food-insecure populations

Objectives:	To improve food security of vulnerable households and increase food availability in Togo.
Activities:	Provide cowpea, soybean and cereal seeds and fertilizer to vulnerable households; and vaccinate birds against Newcastle disease, as well as conducting training and awareness raising on the disease.
Beneficiaries:	24 000 households.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Breeding and Fisheries and ICAT.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 2 906 640.

REGIONAL – Strengthening regional-level food security assessment and coordination capacity and improving agricultural-based emergency responses to the high food price crisis

Objectives:	To improve emergency responses to the high food price crisis through better situation analysis and coordinated provision of agricultural inputs to vulnerable households.
Activities:	Conduct coordinated food security assessments; support methodological developments to better track the food security, nutrition and vulnerability situation; identify action for rapid response to severe food insecurity of vulnerable groups; and provide agricultural and animal production inputs to vulnerable households identified through assessments where gaps are identified in current programmes.
Beneficiaries:	Decision-makers in governments, donors, UN partners, NGOs and vulnerable rural households.
Implementing partners:	Governments, national and regional institutions and international and local NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 3 498 000.

