



Zimbabwe

Background

Numerous changes to the political landscape took place in Zimbabwe during 2008. Violence leading up to the March election affected an estimated 36 000 people, while the signing of an agreement between the main political parties in September was a positive step towards stability. However, an unpredictable policy environment, massive inflation – from 11.2 million percent in June to 231 million percent in July – and the continued decline in both formal and informal employment opportunities have negatively affected household food security across the country.

The prevailing severe economic crisis together with poor harvests, flooding in the southeast and northwest of the country in early-2008, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the suspension of most humanitarian activities for several months have increased the vulnerability of the already struggling population.

KEY FACTS

- Population: 13.3 million
- GNI per capita (USD): 340
- Population below poverty line: 68%
- Life expectancy: 40.9 years
- Total arable land: 8.24%
- Population in agriculture: 66%
- Population undernourished: 47%
- Total land area: 386 670 sq km
- Human Development Index: 151/177

(Source: UN; World Bank; World Factbook)

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

Since 2000, agricultural production has shifted from developed technological systems to more basic subsistence farming that is highly dependent on external conditions, such as weather patterns, and which has increased the risk of recurrent food insecurity.

In 2007/08, agricultural production in Zimbabwe hit an all-time low for most crops and the cereal harvest in April 2008 fell short of national consumption requirements. Adverse weather conditions, deteriorating farming infrastructure, a lack of access to agricultural inputs (including fertilizers and draught power), the impact of HIV/AIDS and the disincentive effect of controlled producer prices led to a decrease in area planted, average yields and overall production.

Preparations for the 2008/09 season were hampered by the limited availability of inputs, particularly of fertilizer and seeds, which are in seriously short supply. Continued fuel shortages affect farmers' ability to use mechanized tillage. Production levels in 2009 are likely to be low as large areas of arable land may remain idle and farming households struggle to access basic services and commodities.

Livestock play a central role in the livelihoods of rural people in Zimbabwe, providing a source of food and income and acting as a fallback asset for households

affected by drought. Dip tanks are the focal point of cattle and small ruminant disease prevention and control strategies. However, budgetary constraints and insufficient foreign currency have reduced the Department of Veterinary Services' capacity to procure appropriate chemicals and vaccines to ensure that animals remain healthy.

FAO response

Timely collection and provision of accurate information on the food security situation is essential for humanitarian organizations to plan future activities. In recent years, FAO has positioned itself as a provider of agricultural data and during 2009 will seek to further strengthen information sharing on food security in Zimbabwe by training agricultural extension workers to undertake data collection in 20 districts, organizing workshops and training activities on IPC and implementing national surveys.



FAO's proposed activities for 2009 include procuring and distributing essential agricultural inputs (fertilizers, seeds, etc.), designing and implementing an extension support system for communal farmers, training smallholders on improved land use and management practices (such as conservation agriculture) and promoting the production of small grain and legume seeds. Support will also be provided to improve the nutritional status of HIV/AIDS-affected households by supplying them with vegetable seeds and tools to establish family or community gardens.

In order to improve the health status of livestock, FAO will support veterinary services to combat tick-borne diseases and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in ruminants and Newcastle disease in poultry. Different ways of transferring the responsibility for managing dip tanks from the state to the communal sector will be tested in three districts, while vaccines will be procured and mass vaccinations carried out against FMD. The capacity of the Central Veterinary Laboratory to produce vaccines against tick-borne diseases and Newcastle disease will be improved. In addition, public awareness of Newcastle disease and avian influenza will be increased through a media campaign.

“The continued decline in both formal and informal employment opportunities have negatively affected household food security.”

PROPOSALS: FAO EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

Total funding required: USD 48 286 500

Provision of basic agricultural inputs and extension support to smallholder farmers (joint project with Sustainable Agriculture Trust, Help, Goal, Development Aid from People to People and Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe)	
Objectives:	To increase productivity of smallholder farmers through input and extension support and training on improved crop management practices.
Activities:	Source and procure inputs (maize, sorghum/millet seed and fertilizers) in a timely manner; select intervention areas based on vulnerability assessments; select beneficiaries; distribute inputs; design and implement an extension support programme; train beneficiaries on improved farming techniques and promote crop diversification; and undertake harvest assessments and continuous monitoring and evaluation.
Beneficiaries:	200 000 households.
Implementing partners:	NGOs, Rural District Councils and farmers' unions.
Duration:	May 2009 – June 2010.
Funds requested:	USD 36 500 000.

Improved food security for rural households through conservation agriculture (joint project with Catholic Relief Services)

Objectives:	To increase the food security of rural households through improved land use and management practices.
Activities:	Select beneficiaries; procure and distribute agricultural inputs; train beneficiaries on CA, micro-dosing and improved land use and management practices and principles; provide extension support; and monitor and evaluate activities.
Beneficiaries:	1 500 households.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, AREX, CTD, NFN, Zimbabwe Farmers' Union, Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers' Union and the Commercial Farmers' Union.
Duration:	April 2009 – May 2012.
Funds requested:	USD 1 284 000.

Production of essential seed for smallholder farmers

Objectives:	To support the production and distribution of legume and small grain seeds.
Activities:	Identify partners (NGOs, farmers' organizations, seed companies, Government services), areas and communities; develop a detailed plan with the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, including crops and varieties to be produced, area under production, training of farmers, farmer-seed producer contracts, supervision of production/field inspection and purchase and marketing arrangements; and implement seed production as outlined in the plans.
Beneficiaries:	NGOs.
Implementing partners:	NGOs, Ministry of Agriculture, AREX, Rural District Councils, farmers' unions and seed companies.
Duration:	September 2008 – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 775 000.

Coordination of information systems around agriculture and food security

Objectives:	To provide the agriculture sector with appropriate coordination services to ensure consistency among interventions; and produce and disseminate accurate, timely and independent information on agriculture and food security to be used as a basis for programming and to inform policy.
Activities:	Train agricultural extension workers to collect data; collect data on agriculture and food security indicators in 20 districts (80 sentinel sites); analyse data, write reports and disseminate information to all stakeholders; organize IPC training and dissemination workshops; create a partnership with GMFS and AREX for data capture and dissemination; and implement national surveys (including the ZimVAC and First and Second Round Crop Assessments).
Beneficiaries:	Government departments, humanitarian organizations, research institutes and UN agencies.
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture and members of the food security cluster.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 1 000 000.

Improving nutrition and dietary diversity for vulnerable households through vegetable and garden-based activities (joint project with Development Aid from People to People, Action contre la faim, CRS and Hlekweni Friends Rural Service)

Objectives:	To improve nutrition status through vegetable production; improve dietary diversity; and increase HIV and nutrition knowledge through training.
Activities:	Select beneficiaries according to defined vulnerability criteria; establish gardens; procure and distribute inputs; train beneficiaries on vegetable production and food preparation; conduct nutrition care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS based on the Health Harvest training manual; and monitor the programme and conduct impact assessments.
Beneficiaries:	50 000 vulnerable households.
Implementing partners:	AIDS service organizations, MoHCW, FNC, National AIDS Council, NGOs, AREX and UNAIDS.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 5 000 000.

Improving the food and nutrition security of urban and rural households in Zimbabwe through education and training

Objectives:	To increase the nutrition knowledge and practices of 50 000 urban and communal households in Zimbabwe through training, cooking demonstrations and production and distribution of information, education and communication (IEC) materials
Activities:	Spearhead the development and printing of community-friendly Healthy Harvest training tools; undertake a baseline survey and evaluation to assess the adequacy of the diet before and after the intervention; prepare simple handouts and nutrition education materials for beneficiary households; conduct training sessions in collaboration with MoHCW and FNC; design a Healthy Harvest national training calendar; and resuscitate Food and Nutrition Management Teams to continue monitoring activities.
Beneficiaries:	50 000 households.
Implementing partners:	NGOs, FNC, MoHCW, National AIDS Council and AREX.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 1 000 000.

Emergency control of epidemic foot-and-mouth disease in Zimbabwe

Objectives:	To enhance household food security through improved marketing opportunities and asset protection by controlling FMD in Matebeleland North and South and Masvingo provinces.
Activities:	Procure vaccines; undertake vaccination campaign and control buffalo-cattle contacts; organize training in surveillance, central data capture and animal movement and coordinate meetings to facilitate crossborder harmonization of FMD control activities; collect reports and samples, develop guidelines and carry out laboratory testing; analyse and produce reports and maps; and repair game fences.
Beneficiaries:	50 000 households.
Implementing partners:	DVS and Ministry of Agriculture.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 1 787 500.

Improving the welfare of rural households in Zimbabwe by controlling Newcastle disease through vaccinations, coupled with avian influenza (AI) awareness and surveillance

Objectives:	To protect assets, through DVS, by controlling Newcastle disease in communal areas of Zimbabwe.
Activities:	Support the production of thermostable vaccine by CVL; carry out mass vaccinations of chickens in rural areas of Zimbabwe (through already trained community-based vaccinators under the supervision of DVS); deliver vaccine to all districts; raise awareness of AI and Newcastle disease through literature, radio and TV programmes and by conducting community meetings; undertake sero-surveillance for Newcastle disease and AI after vaccination to prove progressive control of Newcastle disease and absence of AI; and conduct monitoring and evaluation.
Beneficiaries:	900 000 households (11 000 000 animals).
Implementing partners:	Department of Veterinary Field Services, Department of Veterinary Technical Services, Ministry of Agriculture and NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2009.
Funds requested:	USD 940 000.