

The 2010 drought has affected an estimated 120 000 people in rural areas.



DJIBOUTI

Background

The Djibouti Drought Appeal is the second funding request launched since 2008 in response to the protracted drought that has affected the country over the last four years. With an increasingly low annual rainfall and only 3 percent of the land suitable for farming, the impact on vulnerable populations is becoming more severe. The 2010 drought has affected an estimated 120 000 people in rural areas and has led to the near-exhaustion of the affected population's coping mechanisms, causing massive livestock losses, destruction of rural livelihoods, and increased malnutrition and health problems, especially among children under five.

In addition, the cost of food staples has remained significantly higher than pre-2008 levels, when international food prices soared. Consequently, the country's resistance to international market fluctuations is extremely weak, with 80 percent of food products imported. The combination of these elements, along with the loss of agropastoral assets and rising levels of malnutrition, has significantly harmed the health of the vulnerable population. Furthermore, the escalating violence and instability in south-central Somalia has resulted in an increasing number of asylum-seekers entering Djibouti.

While humanitarian assistance in 2008-2009 alleviated some of the most critical humanitarian gaps, additional support is still necessary and is likely to increase in the coming months, as there is a real risk of nomadic pastoralists and their children becoming critically food insecure.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

Rainfall over the last three years, although usually very limited, has been consistently below average in Djibouti. This situation has had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of herders living in rural regions. Pastoralists have lost up to 70-80 percent of their livestock and have thus been deprived of their principal source of revenue and food, with the remaining livestock weakened and their susceptibility to disease and starvation increasing.

The loss of self-produced foods in the household diet has further intensified the average households' dependence on the market. On top of this, food prices across the country increased by 50 percent between 2006 and 2009. As a result, the purchasing power of households has been severely reduced, with the number and quality of daily meals decreasing.

The reduction in the surface availability of pasture lands as well as limited access to water has led households to migrate within their region or through neighbouring regions, and principally towards the capital Djibouti Ville. The loss of livestock assets combined with the food price crisis has forced vulnerable households to allocate a larger share of their income to purchase food at the expense of other basic needs, such as for health or education.

FAO response

Since 2006, FAO has initiated a programme to support agropastoralists in Djibouti in order to prevent and mitigate the effects of the recurring drought. In 2011, FAO aims to increase the magnitude of this successful programme through activities such as developing small-scale irrigated plots in order to produce fodder and vegetables, and promoting the sustainable use of water harvesting through the provision of appropriate irrigation materials and equipment.

At the same time, support will target existing small agricultural plots to increase production through the distribution of improved vegetable seeds, drought- and salinity-tolerant fodder crop seeds, and intensive field training to demonstrate appropriate dryland farming techniques that can be adapted to local conditions. Assistance will also be provided to the Government to develop a strategic drought response plan. This is expected to improve the nutritional status of both livestock and households, thereby bolstering the overall resilience of rural communities to prevailing drought.

In light of the severe deterioration of livestock health and widespread mortality, the *Ministère de l'agriculture et de l'élevage et de la mer, chargé de ressources hydraulique* (MAEM-RH) with the support of FAO, will take urgent measures to improve the health and productivity of more than 400 000 ruminants across the country, specifically targeting the provision of animal fodder, urgent veterinary services, and regeneration and restoration of pasture by means of innovative water harvesting technology. The proposed intervention is based on a well-established partnership with the Government of Djibouti, the MAEM-RH, UN agencies and NGO partners. Priority areas will be identified by the Technical Committee, through discussions between all partner organizations.



PROPOSALS: FAO EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

Total funding requested: USD 6 540 918

Mitigation response against drought: livestock activities

Objectives:	To improve livestock owners' access to quality services and goods, and enhance the health and productivity of their animals.
Activities:	Undertake a study to have a clear diagnosis of the livestock situation coupled with a brief census; provide animal foods; improve the health of livestock; develop rainwater harvesting for fodder production; promote a regional livestock market; organize information, education and communication (IEC) campaigns for breeders; and train livestock breeders to recognize illnesses and to take prophylactic measures to prevent contraction of illnesses.
Beneficiaries:	120 000 rural people.
Implementing partners:	MAEM-RH.
Duration:	August 2010 – September 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 4 630 446.

Drought emergency response in the pastoral livelihood zone

Objectives:	To improve the food security situation of the drought-affected communities by safeguarding the livelihoods of pastoral communities and promoting alternative ways of living, allowing better preparation for and recovering from climatic disasters.
Activities:	Provide assistance to nearly 500 agropastoralist families to improve small-scale irrigation systems; introduce drought- and salinity-tolerant fodder crop seeds and disseminate information about dryland farming techniques to existing small agricultural plots; provide agricultural inputs and irrigation equipment; carry out field training; and monitor agropastoral livelihoods and assets through the food security and nutritional follow-up.
Beneficiaries:	30 000 rural people (including 10 500 women and 7 500 children).
Implementing partners:	MAEM-RH.
Duration:	August 2010 – August 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 1 910 472.