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WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

Background

The situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is characterized by ongoing political stalemate, regular exposure to violence, continuing restrictions on access and movement of goods and people and persistent human rights violations – all factors leading to a protracted humanitarian crisis. Despite macro-economic stabilization, specific populations are still struggling to meet their basic needs, as their livelihoods remain under immense pressure. The latest available data indicate that almost 1.6 million people, or 38 percent of the population, are food insecure, with increasing exposure to chronic poverty for many and great concerns over longer-term prospects.

Restrictions on reconstruction material, exports and movement of people continue to hamper any meaningful economic revitalization, thereby making a substantial part of the population dependent on external aid. In the West Bank, socio-economic assessments indicate that food-insecure households are more likely to be refugees, particularly living in camps, and rural households whose subsistence depends on agriculture, female-headed and/or headed by someone who is unemployed. Similarly, in the Gaza Strip, food-insecure households are more likely to be female-headed, families deprived of assets as a result of the Israeli offensive at the end of 2008/early 2009 or the destruction of assets in the restricted areas, or those with chronically unemployed members.

Challenges facing food security

The main food security challenge faced by Palestinian households remains economic access to food in local markets, with a majority of food-insecure households spending over half their income on food. High market prices and lack of opportunities to secure employment and higher household incomes are maintaining many Palestinians in a state of entrenched food insecurity. This situation is compounded by poor food utilization, as a result of poor water, sanitation, hygiene, limited access to health care and declining quality of diet, and, to a lesser extent, food availability owing to obstacles to agricultural production, fisheries and food trade/market supplies.

Food insecurity is increasingly prevalent among households whose livelihoods depend on agricultural production (37 percent and 85 percent in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, respectively, which is higher than the local average figures). High operating costs, including water for irrigation and fodder, are placing additional pressure on agricultural livelihoods. In the West Bank, vast swaths of land and many agricultural roads require rehabilitation.

In the Gaza Strip, 178 000 people, or 12 percent of the population, are directly affected by access restrictions to land and fishing areas. Farmers with landholdings in these areas have reported that their income has been reduced to less than one-third of what it was in 2008, while many have given up farming altogether and opted for other work like rubble crushing or participation in the tunnel trade.

FAO response

Under given funding constraints, only 5 percent of the intended 222 934 persons targeted by the Agriculture Sector were reached through the 2010 CAP. Agriculture Sector activities involved the rehabilitation of greenhouses and open fields, distribution of animal feed and agricultural inputs for home gardens and backyard production units and repair of cisterns for water harvesting. Further efforts are required to restore and protect the livelihoods of the most vulnerable farmers, fishers and herders, especially in the less accessible and deprived areas.

In 2011, FAO will focus on coordination and information sharing efforts and the development of common approaches on beneficiary inclusion in planning and implementation, and in gender equality programming. FAO will support priority interventions in the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors to reduce vulnerability and increase farmers', herders' and fishers' household resilience to shocks (e.g. drought, animal disease, price fluctuations, etc.). To this effect, project proposals include support to home gardening (particularly important for women-headed households), small-scale aquaculture farming, livestock production in the most marginalized areas and agriculture-based activities specifically targeted for conflict-affected schoolchildren. In order to optimize the use of existing water resources and alleviate water shortages, FAO will focus on the repair of water reservoirs (e.g. irrigation water systems, groundwater wells and rainwater harvesting cisterns) and support best practices in water management, especially in the most drought-prone areas.



PROPOSALS: FAO EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

Total funding requested: USD 12 776 000

Mitigation of household food insecurity through backyard food production activities targeting vulnerable women and youth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	
Objectives:	To mitigate household food insecurity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through emergency support to backyard food production and to support income-generating opportunities for women and youth to protect and enhance their livelihoods.
Activities:	Provide in-kind and technical support to vulnerable families to enable them to continue/establish backyard food production through provision of production inputs, such as vegetable seeds and fertilizers, ewes and goats, rabbit units, chicken units, small-scale aquaculture equipment, roof-top gardens for urban homes, beehives and kitchen tools for processing home-grown foods; support vulnerable family households with inputs to increase resilience to water shortages (i.e. rainwater collection cisterns and grey wastewater treatment units); provide necessary training and technical know-how to improve access to local food markets; assist vulnerable youth through Junior Farmer Field and Life School activities to enhance local capacities and meet the educational and health needs and priorities of Palestinian youth.
Beneficiaries:	2 400 households (including 2 400 women and 9 600 children).
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Sport, grassroot organizations and women's associations in the targeted areas.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 2 890 000.

Emergency assistance to protect the endangered livelihoods of dairy-dependent families in the Gaza Strip

Objectives:	To protect the livelihoods of vulnerable small-scale male and female dairy producers and employees in the Gaza Strip, safeguard the food security of poor families and increase domestic production of protein-rich food in the Gaza Strip.
Activities:	Support basic production capacities of selected female-headed households through the provision of livestock and related training and equipment; improve genetic quality and milk yields through the resumption of artificial insemination services for small-scale dairy stockholders; provide high-protein fodder and feed concentrate and improve domestic fodder production through intensive dry-feed fodder systems; distribute high-quality veterinary medicines and Californian Mastitis testing kits to improve milk quality; and provide dairy and pasteurization materials and technical support for improved sanitation of dairy production.
Beneficiaries:	550 households (including 550 women and 2 200 children).
Implementing partners:	Gaza Dairy Farmers' Association, women's associations.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 643 500.

Rapid mitigation of the livelihood crisis of small-scale farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers in the Gaza Strip through emergency aquaculture interventions

Objectives:	To increase the resilience of impoverished fishers and farmers by providing alternative sources of income; safeguard the livelihoods of aquaculture producers; and increase the availability of affordable protein in the Gaza Strip.
Activities:	Digging and stocking 100 new 120 m ³ fish ponds, each to be shared between one farming and one fishing household, coupled with: provision of related equipment and fish feed, training in aquaculture techniques and marketing and connecting the fish ponds to irrigation networks of nearby fields; provide feed, fingerlings and training to existing aquaculture producers (with particular emphasis on women); and provide in-kind support for fodder production to improve the resilience of aquaculture livelihoods.
Beneficiaries:	400 households (including 400 women and 1 600 children).
Implementing partners:	Local NGOs, cooperatives, farmers' associations.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 588 500.

Emergency interventions to protect threatened livelihoods of poor and small-scale farmers in Seam Zones, Area C, vulnerable pockets of rural Area B and the Gaza Strip

Objectives:	To protect threatened livelihoods of small-scale farmers in the Seam Zones, Area C, vulnerable pockets of rural Area B and the Gaza Strip through emergency repair of damaged open field farms, greenhouses and orchards and to improve management of agricultural assets, irrigation water and pest protection.
Activities:	Repair greenhouses, including the provision of plastic sheeting, proof nets and double door systems; provide in-kind and technical support to restore open fields and orchards (provision of plastic mulch, seed and seedlings, organic fertilizers, insect traps, agricultural tools, new varieties of rootstocks [and/or grafting] and related training, repair water harvesting, storage units [cisterns] and irrigation networks) for small-scale farmers in rural Areas B (such villages as northwest Jerusalem, Tubas area, Nablus and Jenin), Area C (Tubas, Tammoun, Jenin, Nablus and Bethlehem), Seam Zones (Qalqilia and Tulkarem) and the Gaza Strip; and provide emergency technical support in IPM and good agricultural practices for small-scale farmers, particularly women.
Beneficiaries:	3 100 households (including 3 100 women and 12 400 children).
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, women's and men's farming associations and agricultural NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 3 000 000.

Emergency support to endangered livelihoods dependent on livestock in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Objectives:	To protect the endangered livelihoods of livestock-holding families in Area C of the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip through the provision of emergency in-kind and technical support to prevent further erosion of their productive capacity and asset base.
Activities:	Assist livestock-holding families through emergency distribution of animal feed, medicine and veterinary kits, cistern repair and/or construction, and re-introduction of artificial insemination for improved livestock productivity and water availability; provide veterinary services and vaccination programmes to herders that lack access to these basic services; increase local livestock feed production through rangeland rehabilitation, including the introduction of drought-tolerant shrubs; provide training on improved herd management practices, including hygienic practices to improve food safety and targeted training for youth; support the role of livestock-holders' associations in protecting the livelihoods of the most vulnerable herders; and support small-scale income-generating livestock activities, especially for women dairy producers and households with a large number of children.
Beneficiaries:	3 220 households (including 3 220 women and 12 880 children).
Implementing partners:	Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, women's and men's farming associations and agricultural NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 3 000 000.

Quick impact interventions to alleviate water shortages among vulnerable farming and herding households to stabilize their livelihoods and strengthen resilience

Objectives:	To protect threatened agricultural livelihoods and strengthen male- and female-headed households' resilience to water shortages and enhance the overall food security of vulnerable households.
Activities:	Repair and/or establish rainwater harvesting cisterns in selected areas of the West Bank to support vulnerable farming households in orchard production and ensure herding households have enough water for their animals; increase water availability for irrigation by improving water storage (e.g. through repair of water reservoirs and groundwater wells) and providing training in water management; provide grey wastewater treatment units to support the home gardening activities of vulnerable farmers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and provide in-kind and technical support for the introduction of drought-tolerant shrubs in selected areas of the West Bank to increase the availability of local animal fodder and make the best use of scarce and costly water resources.
Beneficiaries:	740 households (including 740 women and 2 960 children).
Implementing partners:	Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 1 600 000.

Enhancing evidence-based planning, monitoring and effective coordination of emergency response in food security and agriculture

Objectives:	To enhance information and analysis of priority interventions for sector-wide emergency food security and agriculture interventions.
Activities:	Analyse socio-economic and food security indicators, determinants and trends and estimates of food intakes using income and expenditure data and national agricultural statistics; address key information gaps to inform emergency livelihood protection interventions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; provide sex- and age-disaggregated socio-economic and food security indicators and related resilience analysis to improve sector-level gender-responsive programming; ensure evidence-based stakeholder consultations at central and decentralized levels to verify and complement findings; disseminate updated knowledge on agriculture and food security among national and international actors; and improve information sharing and linkages between the Palestinian Authority, national and international organizations and various sector/subsector thematic working groups to properly address and coordinate emergency interventions addressing food security and agriculture.
Beneficiaries:	West Bank and Gaza Strip population.
Implementing partners:	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, research centres.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 760 000.

Improving access to high-quality alternative learning for the children in Gaza by rehabilitating Gaza's only agriculture secondary school

Objectives:	To increase access to, and infrastructure and equipment for, alternative agriculture-based learning opportunities for conflict-affected children in Gaza.
Activities:	Provision of alternative agriculture-based learning/teaching opportunities for conflict-affected children and teachers through activities such as upgrading school food-processing and dairy facilities, repair of small livestock and poultry units, provision of beehives and beekeeping equipment, repair of aquaculture ponds and greenhouses, clearing and planting of school open field land and provision of training in agricultural techniques, processing and marketing; provision of age- and gender-appropriate school infrastructure and basic classroom teaching material for boys and girls; and re-introduction of the school bus service, which will especially benefit girls who miss out on education opportunities due to lack of appropriate transportation services and vulnerable children in the southern governorates of the Gaza Strip (Rafah and Khan Younis).
Beneficiaries:	225 students (40 women and 185 children).
Implementing partners:	N/A.
Duration:	January – December 2011.
Funds requested:	USD 294 000.