



Central African Republic



23 December 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

- Nearly the entire population of the Central African Republic – **4.6 million people** – is affected by the deteriorating humanitarian situation. An estimated 2 million people are in need of humanitarian aid, 1.3 million people are in need of food aid and 871 700 have been internally displaced. Within the last two weeks, 1 000 people have been killed.
- Agriculture provides the main source of livelihoods and income for millions of people. Agricultural activities have been severely affected by the widespread conflict.
- Missed planting opportunities can be prevented through timely provision of seeds and fertilizers for the main 2014 maize planting season, starting in early March in the central and southern regions of the country, and the sorghum and millet planting season, starting in May in the northern region.
- A Strategic Response Plan has been prepared to provide integrated life-saving assistance to those affected, as well as activities building the resilience of affected populations to further shocks, through the cluster approach, including the Food Security Cluster led by FAO and WFP. As part of the Strategic Response Plan, a 100-day response plan has been developed to boost the humanitarian response to the most urgent needs.
- Through women's farming groups, FAO will seek to engage women as leaders in promoting peacebuilding and dialogue within their communities, and support them in working together to improve food security and economic wellbeing of their families.
- A humanitarian system-wide Level 3 Emergency Response has been declared and FAO has declared a Level 3 Emergency Response, ensuring that staff is dedicated full-time to the crisis at country level and headquarters.
- FAO has strengthened its team in the Central African Republic with the deployment of additional experts that are based in Bangui and dedicated to managing the crisis. The Organization is coordinating field visits, as well as opening a number of sub-offices and branches (Bouar, Bossangoa, Bria) in the most affected areas.

BACKGROUND

- **Widespread civil insecurity caused a sharp reduction in 2013 crop production**, and is likely to severely impact the 2014 cropping season.
- Due to persistent insecurity, households have relied on stress or crisis coping mechanisms, putting their livelihoods at risk.
- **Food prices are high and volatile due to severe market disruptions.**
- **A September 2013 food security assessment** carried out by WFP, in partnership with ACF, FAO, OCHA, UNICEF and ICASSES indicated that approximately 1.3 million people are estimated to be severely or moderately food insecure and that, due to persistent insecurity, households have relied on crisis coping mechanisms like selling their livestock.
- **Of the USD 247 million requested in the Strategic Response Plan** launched on 16 December 2013, USD 136.5 million is immediately required to rapidly scale-up operations and to increase the provision of protection and life-saving assistance to people in need of urgent care.
- Funding requirements for the **Food Security Cluster** are of **USD 61 million** to support **1 850 000 people**, of which FAO will support 500 000 people.

Clusters activated:

- Coordination: OCHA
- Early recovery: UNDP
- Education: UNICEF/COOPI
- Emergency Telecoms: WFP
- Food Security: FAO/WFP
- Health: WHO
- Logistics: WFP
- Refugees: UNHCR
- Nutrition: UNICEF
- Protection: UNHCR
- WASH: UNICEF

CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURE

- ❖ Disruption of market linkages due to insecurity.
- ❖ Production has been hampered by insecurity.
- ❖ Standing crops, stored seed/grain and productive assets have been lost, leaving the population food insecure and unable to resume crop production.
- ❖ Lack of immediate assistance will trigger further losses and longer-term suffering.
 - Delayed action will lead to worsening food security.

PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS

FAO can prevent further livestock losses and missed planting opportunities with timely donor support, saving families from a domino effect of continued losses and to rebuild their livelihoods to better manage risks and take advantage of local opportunities.

As part of the FAO/WFP co-led Food Security Cluster, prioritized agricultural assistance includes:

- 1. Immediate resumption of agricultural production:** provide improved seed varieties and tools, restore and protect communal storage facilities, set up cash transfers to restart economic activities and create women socio-economic networks, as well as support post-harvest handling and market linkages.
- 2. Strengthen institutional monitoring and early warning capacity:** coordinate food security partners and train on risk identification, preparedness, response and monitoring of needs, as well as setting up a national early warning system.
- 3. Strengthening sustainable agriculture to increase the resilience of communities:** support farmers to improve techniques for production, soil conservation and water management, as well as activities to strengthen the role of women in agricultural production.
- 4. FAO is committed to working through groups of women farmers** to provide an enabling environment for inter-community peacebuilding dialogue through investment in their joint social and economic activities.
- 5. FAO will be fully involved in the Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment** that should be carried out by the end of December.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- All up-to-date information is available on our Web site: www.fao.org/emergencies
 - Dominique Burgeon, Director, Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (Dominique.Burgeon@fao.org)
 - Alexis Bonte, Designated Responsible Official, FAO Central African Republic (Alexis.Bonte@fao.org)
-