



Fiji: Tropical Cyclone Winston

SITUATION REPORT – 4 March 2016

IN NUMBERS



350 000 people

affected in Fiji (40 percent of the population)



100 percent

of crops damaged in hardest-hit areas



USD 2.89 million

needed for FAO-led emergency and recovery activities

KEY MESSAGES

- **Damage to crops and livestock is estimated at USD 61 million.** This figure will increase following the assessment of the fisheries subsector. With much of the country relying on subsistence production to meet their food needs, restoring agriculture and fishery-based livelihoods is critical to avoid dependency on food aid in the coming months.
- **Affected families urgently need food and agricultural assistance** – including seeds, planting materials and farming equipment – to avoid food shortages and quickly replant crops.
- **Fijian women – a majority of whom rely on agriculture as their sole source of income – are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, and must be a key focus of response efforts.**
- **FAO requires USD 2.89 million** to provide immediate crop, livestock and fisheries support to 25 370 cyclone-affected people. The medium- to long-term recovery costs will be greater, and have not been estimated at this time.

MAP

Fiji: Tropical Cyclone Winston

Source: OCHA



Government priority areas for emergency response are shown on the map in red and are numbered in order of priority.

1. Lau group
2. Lomaiviti group (Koro)
3. Lomaiviti group (Ovalau)
4. Taveuni
5. Cakaudrove West
6. Bua
7. Tailevu & Naitasiri
8. Ra
9. Ba (eastern)
10. Ba (western)
11. Nadroga & Navosa
12. Mamanuca group

BACKGROUND

On 20 and 21 February, Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Winston cut a path of destruction across Fiji, causing widespread damage in all four divisions: Eastern, Northern, Western and Central. With sustained winds of 230 km per hour and gusts of 325 km per hour, the tropical cyclone was one of the most severe to ever hit the South Pacific. An estimated 350 000 Fijians were affected (roughly 40 percent of the population), including nearly 55 000 who remain in evacuation centres. The Government of Fiji – which promptly declared a State of Natural Disaster – estimates the total damage at USD 500 million.

CHALLENGES FACING FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Damage to crops, livestock and fisheries is extensive. In the most-affected areas, up to 100 percent of crops were damaged or destroyed. The death of small livestock has diminished vital sources of animal protein, and sheds and fences will need repairing. The estimated cost of damage to crops and livestock is USD 61 million. While the impact on fisheries is still being assessed, severe damage to boats and fishing equipment, as well as some hatcheries, has been noted in coastal areas. This will limit the amount of fish available in local markets and affect fishing families' food security.

Subsistence agriculture – a primary food source for most Fijians – was especially hit. A large proportion of Fiji's rural and outer island population is engaged in agriculture, relying on their own production to meet their food needs. Some cyclone-hit areas saw the total destruction of fruit-bearing and other trees, as well as backyard vegetable gardens. Root crops – a staple for both rural and urban households – also sustained heavy damage.

Affected families need urgent support to avoid food shortages and quickly replant fast-growing crops. With many subsistence crops ruined and community markets either damaged or inaccessible, the availability of meat and fresh produce is increasingly limited. Farming and fishing families risk becoming dependent on food aid in the coming weeks if they are not supported to restore their livelihoods. Women are particularly vulnerable, as agriculture is a primary source of income for a majority of Fijian women (and one of the few sources available to them).

The cyclone has aggravated the effects of El Niño-related events, including a drought which has already diminished food production and access to fresh water over the past year. The combined effects will further reduce peoples' capacity to purchase food to feed their families, or agricultural inputs in order to resume production.

FAO RESPONSE

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES



Crops

Vegetable seeds
Planting materials
Organic fertilizers
Hand tools



Livestock

Feed for poultry
Poultry restocking



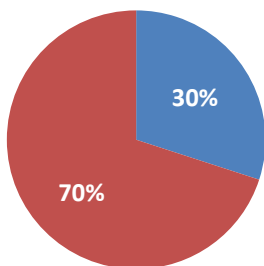
Fisheries

Fish feed
Restocking of fish ponds
Repair/replacement of lost/damaged vessels, engines and fishing gear

ACTIONS TAKEN TO-DATE

- ✓ FAO Subregional Multidisciplinary Team has been mobilized and is working under FAO's Subregional Coordinator.
- ✓ Emergency Response Manager deployed to Fiji, along with an Administrative Officer to arrange the procurement of seeds and planting materials
- ✓ Assistant FAO Representative in Fiji is working in close consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Forestry and Fisheries, and partners of the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster.
- ✓ Agricultural Assessment Officer deployed to Fiji as part of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team and a global Food Security Cluster Officer will soon arrive in Fiji to assist the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster.
- ✓ A Technical Cooperation Programme project being prepared to enable FAO to begin supporting most-affected areas.

FUNDING



■ Funding received:
USD 860 000

■ Funding gap:
USD 2.03 million

PARTNERSHIPS

The Fijian Government is leading the response. FAO is working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Forestry and Fisheries.

National Clusters are identifying needs and are working in cooperation with international partners – including FAO – to ensure gaps are covered.

The ongoing planning and response efforts build on a strong collaboration among FAO and partners in Fiji and the region in disaster preparedness work prior to Tropical Cyclone Winston.

FAO requires
USD 2.89 million

To assist
25 370 people

Donors: Belgium and FAO.

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