



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

FAO'S ROLE IN THE MADAGASCAR FLASH APPEAL 2008

March 2008

Background

Cyclones Fame and Ivan have affected more than 239 000 people in Madagascar. Striking only three weeks apart (27 January and 17 February, respectively), the cyclones triggered torrential rains and flooding that caused extensive damage to homes, infrastructure, lives and livelihoods. Approximately 148 000 people are without shelter, let alone the productive assets necessary to recover their losses.

The Malagasy are among the world's poorest populations, with an estimated 70 percent living on less than US\$1 per day. The crisis has compounded already acute levels of underlying vulnerability, particularly in northeastern and northwestern areas.

The overlap between the country's lean period, when food reserves are most scarce, and the cyclone season intensifies the likelihood for food insecurity to surpass already critical levels. Recent assessments reveal that the food stock of an estimated 200 000 people have been lost to the floods and up to 90 percent of families living on crop plantations may soon face acute food insecurity.

The Madagascar Flash Appeal 2008 was launched on 3 March to support Government efforts to respond to the immediate and early recovery needs of over 239 000 people in urgent need of assistance.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

Approximately 80 percent of Madagascar's population depends on agriculture-related activities for income and, for many, as a means to provide food for their families. The torrential rainfall and flooding triggered by Cyclones Fame and Ivan inundated important farming areas in the northeast and northwest. It is estimated that almost 80 percent of expected production has been affected and will suffer partial or total losses.

Further to the country's underlying vulnerability to frequent climatic hazards – including chronic drought, flooding and recurrent cyclones – the crisis struck during the lean season, spanning from February to May.

Moreover, the impact of the cyclones will potentially resonate until December as recently planted crops due for harvest in May/June will be severely hampered, stretching the lean season and food insecurity until the secondary harvest at year's end.

Rural communities are in urgent need of livelihood production inputs – including seeds, fertilizers and agricultural tools – in order to increase their food production levels and purchasing power during this critical time. With agriculture as a means to sustainably improve household nutrition and food security, rehabilitation of the sector will be key to strengthening the capacity of rural populations to recover from present as well as future shocks.

FAO in Madagascar

Under the Madagascar Flash Appeal 2008, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) aims to restore agricultural production among farming households most affected by the recent cyclones and resulting floods.

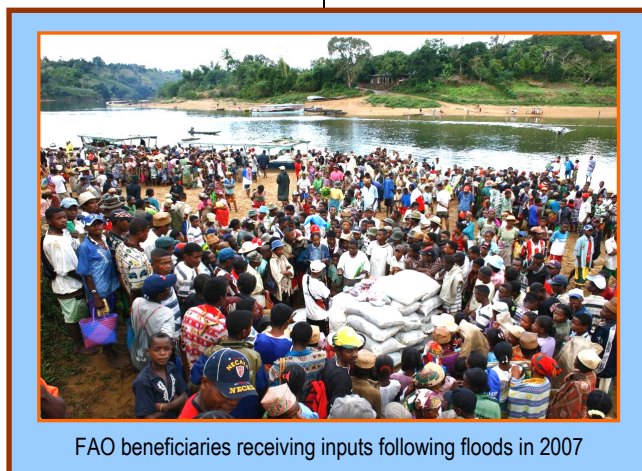
As the lead agency in the agriculture sector, FAO will continue its coordination role among humanitarian partners to ensure technically sound

interventions, avoid overlap, and maximize the synergies of agricultural interventions and their outcomes.

Within the framework of the Madagascar Flash Appeal 2008, FAO's main objective is to protect rural livelihoods through:

- **providing seeds and agricultural tools;**
- **creating a seed multiplication/crop diversification structure** to avoid repeated distributions;
- **rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure** in cooperation with food-for-work programmes;
- **preparing more detailed damage assessments;** and
- **maximizing efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural relief programmes** through increased coordination and local participation, provision of technical advice and monitoring and evaluation of relief actions.

As part of the Madagascar Flash Appeal 2008, FAO appealed for **US\$1 million**. Unmet funding amounts to **US\$744 338**.



FAO beneficiaries receiving inputs following floods in 2007





FAO'S COMPONENT OF THE MADAGASCAR FLASH APPEAL 2008

Total funding required: US\$744 338



Project Title: Provision of seeds for the most flood impacted populations.

Objectives: To restart agricultural production through the urgent provision of agricultural seeds in the region of Analanjirofo, and districts of Vavantenina, Fenerive Est, Mananara Nord and Soanierana Ivongo.

Beneficiaries: 60 000 households.

Implementing Partners: CARE, non-governmental organizations and the Regional Directorate for Rural Development.

Total Budget: US\$800 000

Funds requested: US\$544 338

Project Title: Urgent crop assessment and training of technicians in charge of assessments.

Objectives: Train local partners and Ministry of Agriculture extension workers in reliable data collection in the regions of Analanjirofo, Atsinanana, Sofia, Vatovavy-Fitovinany and Alaotra-Mangoro, and the districts of Vavantenina, Sainte Marie, Soanierana Ivongo, Mananara Nord, Fenerive Est, Tamatave II, Manakara, Manajary, Midongy du sud, Befotaka, Ambanja, Mampikony, Bealalana, Mandritsara and Amparafaravola.

Beneficiaries: 5 regions and 15 districts.

Funds Requested: US\$200 000

FAO's proposed project, "**Provision of seeds for the most flood impacted populations**", seeks to distribute essential agricultural inputs to 60 000 vulnerable households in Analanjirofo, the region most severely affected by Cyclones Fame and Ivan. Many families in the region have lost their entire harvest and seed stock, thereby entering the lean season with neither food reserves nor the means to replant.

A joint assessment mission carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, the World Food Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicates that approximately 25 000 hectares of staple and cash crops in Analanjirofo have been seriously damaged due to the heavy rains and wind. In the areas selected for project assistance, it is estimated that around 80 percent of staple crops and between 95 and 100 percent of cash crops have been lost.

With donor support, the most affected farming households in the region will benefit from bean, maize, rice and horticultural seeds, empowering them to resume agricultural production, provide for their families and sustain their livelihoods. The timely provision of assistance will be critical in order for these families to have a harvest for this June and July.

As the expected decline in agricultural production in 2008 will likely be accompanied by a rise in food costs, increasing the self-reliance of farming households is crucial at this time. Project activities will directly contribute to increasing the availability of quality seed varieties, selected based on prevailing agro-ecological conditions and the preference of farmers.

As reflected in the Madagascar Flash Appeal 2008, there is an urgent need to conduct detailed assessments to further evaluate the damage and needs arising from the recent cyclones. "**Urgent crop assessment and training of technicians in charge of assessments**" endeavours to carry out thorough crop assessments while strengthening the capacity of local partners and Ministry of Agriculture extension workers in reliable data collection.

The quality of these assessments is crucial to determining the most appropriate actions to assist families most in need. In view of Madagascar's high vulnerability to a broad range of climatic hazards, increasing capacity in this regard will have a direct impact on the appropriateness and outreach of humanitarian interventions in response to this and upcoming crises.

With support from the donor community, the project will conduct, and strengthen the foundation for, reliable crop assessments in 15 districts in Analanjirofo, Atsinanana, Sofia, Vatovavy-Fitovinany and Alaotra-Mangoro regions. The Madagascar Flash Appeal 2008, launched on 3 March, will be updated as further assessments are undertaken in the regions targeted under this project.

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