



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

NATIONAL RESPONSE PROGRAMME

SIERRA LEONE

INCREASING THE RESILIENCE OF LIVELIHOODS AFFECTED BY THE EBOLA OUTBREAK

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EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK



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CONTEXT

Since May 2014, Sierra Leone has faced one of the largest Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreaks in the world, which first appeared in a small village in the Kailahun District of neighbouring Guinea. The country is expected to become one of those most affected by the virus in view of an increased number of cases reported in November and December 2014. In addition to the tragic loss of life caused by EVD, its negative social and economic impacts threaten the food and nutrition security of the population.

The Government has enacted prevention and control measures to respond to the outbreak, including the establishment of quarantine zones and movement restrictions; however, these measures have curtailed the movement of goods and services, including food items in the region, leading to panic buying, food shortages and significant price hikes. The season's crop harvest began in September, but the labour shortage placed food and cash crop production at risk in affected areas, jeopardizing the food security of tens of thousands of people.

The EVD outbreak erupted at a crucial period in the agricultural season for rice and other important food crops, including rice, cassava, sweet potatoes, vegetable crops and palm oil. Many farmers were unable to complete key, time-critical agricultural activities owing to travel restrictions and fear of the disease. Consequently, reduced availability and increased food prices were observed, largely owing to:

- The disruption of farming activities and trade of inputs and food products as a result of the abandonment of land, travel restrictions and banning of weekly markets: This year's yields are expected to be considerably below pre-crisis levels.
- Volatility of prices of food and other necessities due to shortages caused by decreased production, transportation constraints and quarantine: households are heavily dependent on food bought at markets – 59 percent of rice producers must purchase additional rice to supplement what they produce. Agribusinesses including producers of crops for export are similarly affected, as traders can no longer purchase in bulk from farmers/farmers' groups simply because crop markets are not functioning well or not functioning at all.
- Significant post-harvest losses during transportation of perishable foods: In some areas, this results in shortages of goods on the market, while in other areas (e.g. Koinadugu), the prices of various varieties of vegetables have fallen to a point where a large part of the harvest is left to rot and the rest is sold at a low price. Evidence collected indicates that there has been between a 20 to 100 percent decrease in farm gate prices of vegetables.

Findings of the rapid assessment study indicate that 47 percent of respondents feel that the EVD outbreak is having considerable adverse effects on their farming activities. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/Global Information and Early Warning System

Disease Impact on Agriculture Simulation Model in Sierra Leone shows that:

- Total crop production (2.09 million tonnes) experienced a decrease of about five percent compared to that recorded for the harvest of 2013. Of this total, milled rice production (using the milling rate of 66.7 percent) was estimated at 770 000 tonnes, accounting for approximately 85 percent of total cereal production; this represents an 8 percent decrease compared to the level of the year prior.
- From mid-July to August 2014 in Freetown, shortages of goods on the market led to a 13 to 50 percent increase in the prices of key commodities (e.g. imported rice, fish, cassava, groundnuts and palm oil)

STRATEGIC RESPONSE

The Food Security and Nutrition Working Group – of which FAO supports the secretariat – recommends the following actions: (i) re-open key periodic markets under sanitary conditions; (ii) facilitate transportation of food commodities to market centres; (iii) encourage farmers and farmers' groups to resume farming under safe conditions in chiefdoms or sections where EVD prevalence is low; (iv) support smallholders with agricultural inputs for the next agricultural season; and (v) monitor farm harvest and market dynamics. The most urgent priority of FAO and all United Nations (UN) partners is stopping the epidemic and ending the tragic loss of life. Immediate action must also be taken to avoid a potential food security crisis.

This National Response Programme is in line with FAO's overall response strategy and is part of its Response Programme to the EVD outbreak in West Africa.

FAO is appealing for a total of USD 12.75 million to assist nearly 70 000 farming households most affected by the outbreak in Sierra Leone.

1 SAVE LIVES BY STOPPING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE

FAO RESPONSE STRATEGY		FAO STRATEGIC OUTPUTS IN SIERRA LEONE	USD
Output 1.1	Disease spread controlled in affected countries and prevented in at-risk countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social mobilization in rural areas through the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries agricultural extension officers. - 13 districts covered and around 70 000 rural families benefit from Ebola sensitization. 	1 500 000
Output 1.2	Preparedness and response capacities improved at national and regional levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Food Security Working Group supports partners (NGOs, donors) in reviewing their programmes to ensure alignment with the Ebola response. - Reduce risk of Ebola spill over from wildlife: Support wildlife/animal surveillance systems, epidemiological data collection and training to link disease detection to health interventions. 	150 000
TOTAL			1 650 000

2 BOOST INCOMES AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TO SAFEGUARD LIVELIHOODS

FAO RESPONSE STRATEGY		FAO STRATEGIC OUTPUTS IN SIERRA LEONE	USD
Output 2.1	Impacts assessed in affected and neighboring countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food security and nutrition assessments including value chain analysis. 	500 000
Output 2.2	Food and nutrition security ensured or restored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency crop production and harvesting: Provision of a quick start productive package to 50 000 households. - Safety nets: Innovative cash transfer programme to improve current incomes and consumption (households will receive USD 15 per month). 	7 500 000
TOTAL			8 000 000

3 REDUCE RISKS AND IMPROVE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

FAO RESPONSE STRATEGY		FAO STRATEGIC OUTPUTS IN SIERRA LEONE	USD
Output 3.3	Best practices in emergency response to EVD promoted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regenerate the income of affected farmers through improved access to markets for key agricultural commodities (including support to the formation and/or strengthening of the Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs), equipment and storage facilities and credit access [Caisse de Résilience]). - Support Farmer Field Schools (FFS) through the promotion of production and consumption of alternative sources of animal protein as alternatives to bush meat (20 000 households targeted). 	3 000 000
TOTAL			3 000 000

4 STRENGTHEN COORDINATION FOR IMPROVED RESPONSE

FAO RESPONSE STRATEGY		FAO STRATEGIC OUTPUTS IN SIERRA LEONE	USD
Output 4.1	Regional and national actions coordinated for effective rapid response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination and exchange of experience between relevant partners (NGOs, ministries and the UN system). 	100 000
TOTAL			100 000
GRAND TOTAL			12 750 000

IMPLEMENTATION MODALITY

This programme will be implemented in close partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFF), the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, and relevant stakeholders working across the entire food chain, including strong partnerships with the UN system and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). Programme implementation will be guided by the existing mutual accountability framework and Ebola response structures (National Ebola Response Centre at central and district levels and the Presidential Task Force). FAO is currently partnering with international NGOs such as *Action Contre la Faim*, Concern Worldwide, Congressional Research Service, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*, Sustainable Nutrition and Agriculture Promotion (SNAP), Plan International and *Welthungerhilfe*.

FAO is strategically positioned to coordinate the implementation of this programme owing to its technical competence and experience in providing assistance to the MAFF, particularly in regards to the planning, implementation and coordination of agricultural programmes in the country. In addition, FAO has the institutional capacities necessary to successfully implement the proposed activities, especially in terms of coordinating the activities of its partners to achieve its objectives. The implementation of the proposed activities will be directly supported by the FAO Resilience Hub for West Africa with the operational and technical support from the FAO Regional Office for Africa and FAO headquarters.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE AND BENEFICIARIES

In line with the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) plan, and following the recent joint rapid food security assessment, crop assessment and other food security and livelihoods studies, FAO will directly target 70 000 rural households (approximately 349 092 people) nationwide. The volume and prioritization of support will be based on the prevalence of EVD and the impact the programme is expected to have on agricultural activities in each district. At least 30 percent of beneficiaries will be women.

The current intervention plan will focus on 13 districts in the most severely affected areas of Bo, Bombali, Kailahun, Kenema, and Port Loko, supporting 10 percent of rural households in those areas. In the less severely affected districts of Bonthe, Kambia, Koinadugu, Kono, Moyamba, Pujehun, Tonkoli and Western Rural, five percent of farming households will be supported.

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