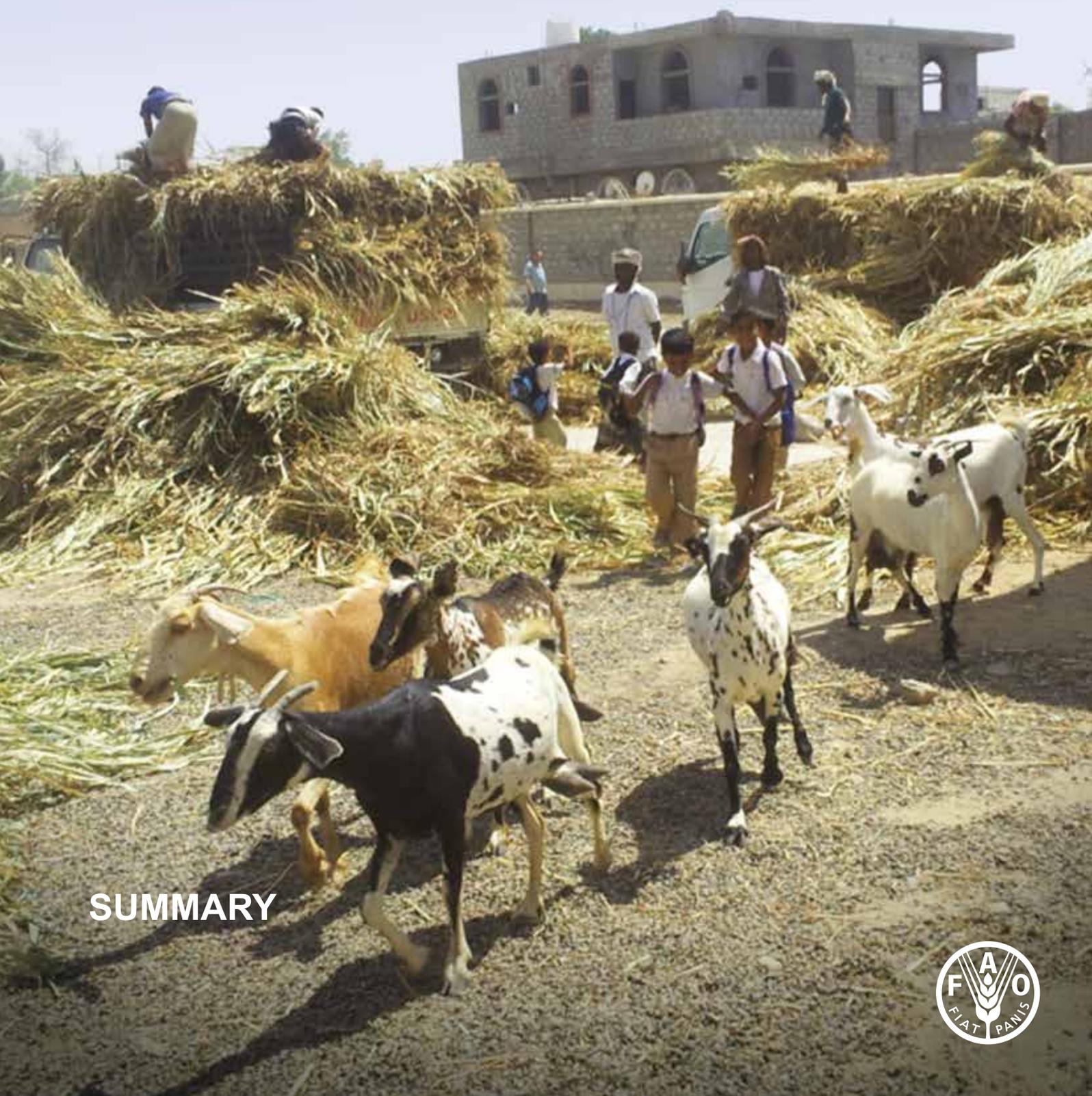


# YEMEN

## PLAN OF ACTION

Towards Resilient and Sustainable Livelihoods for  
Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security

2014–2018



**SUMMARY**



## INTRODUCTION

Yemen, one of the least developed countries in the world, is experiencing a complex and protracted crisis that has heavily affected its political and socio-economic stability and economic performance. Years of conflict – compounded by the degradation of natural resources, limited food production, climate change and variability, population growth and widespread unemployment – have made much of Yemen's population extremely vulnerable.

Hunger affects 10.5 million people (nearly half the nation), including 4.5 million who are severely food insecure. An overlapping 55 percent live in poverty and 35 percent are unemployed. Rural populations are disproportionately vulnerable, accounting for 84 percent of the country's poor.

Competition over scarce opportunities, resources and services is increasing fast. Yemen's population is growing by 3.6 percent per year, half of its people are under the age of 15 and 60 percent of youth are jobless. Lack of employment opportunities, particularly for youth, fuels alienation and exclusion from the state and economy, and feeds into conflict, instability and increased migration. Growing numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees, migrants and returnees throughout Yemen are exerting further unsustainable pressure.

Once self-sufficient in cereals, Yemen now depends on oil revenue to import nearly all of the country's food. Around 95 percent of cereals consumed and 85 percent of overall foodstuffs were imported in 2013. Rising international commodity prices further threaten the food consumption and dietary diversity of Yemen's poor, as families must spend more money for the same amount of food. To cope, poor households often cut other critical expenses, such as schooling and medical care.

There is tremendous need, scope and potential to strengthen agriculture in Yemen. The sector – encompassing crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry production – employs over half of the labour force and provides a livelihood to two out of three people. Despite severe resource constraints, agriculture remains one of the most promising sectors in terms of employment creation, economic growth and trade development.



*Hunger affects 10.5 million people (nearly half the nation).*

## CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURE

In order to strengthen Yemen's agriculture sector – and in doing so improve the socio-economic status of its people – significant challenges must be overcome. The country faces serious environmental, natural resource and political constraints that will continue to erode its production capacities if left unchecked.

Yemen's 1.45 million hectares of cultivated land (2.75 percent of the total land area) supports 1.19 million smallholders. This level of agricultural density contributes to land degradation and deterioration due to deforestation, rising soil salinity and accelerating rates of desertification.

In addition, plant pests and diseases, combined with the presence of transboundary animal diseases (TADs) and zoonoses have impacted smallholders' crop and animal production capacity. These threats include desert locust, tomato borer and red palm weevil outbreaks; wheat rust diseases which are presently causing significant crop damage and losses; as well as Rift Valley fever, brucellosis, tuberculosis and rabies.



*Yemen is one of the world's most water-stressed countries.*

Yemen is also highly vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather events, such as drought, flooding, changing rainfall patterns, increased storm frequency and severity, and sea-level rise. Moreover, it is one of the world's most water-stressed countries, and water shortages will continue in the absence of better water management policies. This depletion of water resources will in turn accelerate severe land degradation and increase the population's vulnerability to natural disasters and food insecurity.

Yemen's agriculture sector is also constrained by longstanding governance problems, which have led to underdevelopment and a lack of investment in basic infrastructure and services. These issues impact the country's ability to enact large-scale agricultural reform, transitioning from a traditional agriculture system to a modernized farming sector. Without international assistance, Yemen has very limited capabilities to adopt innovative technologies in the crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry subsectors, to establish and strengthen subsector linkages, and to provide access to improved inputs and markets.

Also due to Yemen's weak governance system, conflict, civil insecurity and associated human displacement will likely continue over the coming years. Conflict and displacement have already severely disrupted agriculture-based livelihoods, resulting in extensive crop and livestock losses and destroyed inputs that are needed to recover food production. Over the years, agricultural income sources have sharply declined, as fields were left idle and unharvested. Further, a steep rise in the cost of inputs, such as seeds, fertilizer and fuel, has increased production costs and reduced the cultivated area per household.

IDPs have been especially impacted – 80 percent are farming and sharecropping families or agricultural labourers, and nearly one-third own livestock. Protracted displacement, which is expected to continue in the near future, is placing increased pressure on already scarce natural resources and basic services. Many of the displaced will need various forms of assistance to establish viable livelihoods in their areas of return or displacement.

Women have been particularly affected by the crisis as well, and have resorted to negative coping strategies. Their malnutrition rates have increased significantly: one-quarter of Yemeni women between the ages of 15 and 49 are acutely malnourished. Women are an important part of the agricultural workforce but have restricted access to productive resources, services and assets, limiting their productive potential. Providing women access to the same opportunities in agriculture as for men can boost productivity dramatically.



*Providing women access to the same opportunities as men can boost productivity dramatically.*

The socio-economic and environmental causes of food insecurity and malnutrition are likely to persist in both the medium- and long-term. Disruption to livelihoods due to local conflict, global variability in fuel and cereal prices, the reduction in remittances arising from mass deportation and migration, the lifting of fuel subsidies and inflation will cause shocks to household incomes and place continuing downward pressure on the purchasing power of the poorest families.

These short- and medium-term factors will be aggravated by a failure to address the underlying structural causes of food insecurity, including inefficient agricultural markets, high unemployment and low household food production in rural areas. Much of the humanitarian work in Yemen is conducted to cover the most critical gaps related to conflict. It is vital that humanitarian action is integrated into efforts to address the underlying causes of vulnerability, including recovery interventions and long-term structural support and investments in basic social infrastructure, livelihoods and services so that national (and regional) stability can be achieved and sustained.

At the 32<sup>nd</sup> Food and Agriculture of the United Nations (FAO) Regional Conference for the Near East, held in Rome from 24 to 28 February 2014, Member Countries called on FAO to support Yemen by combining all efforts that would contribute to reduce chronic food insecurity, improve opportunities for rural employment and enhance investment in the agriculture sector. The Plan of Action detailed herein was prepared by FAO at the request of the Government of Yemen and presented to national stakeholders and humanitarian and development partners in a workshop chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO in Sana'a on 14 April 2014.



*Agriculture remains one of the most promising sectors for employment creation, economic growth and trade development.*

# FAO Plan of Action for Yemen:

Towards Resilient and Sustainable Livelihoods for Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security

A resilience-based approach to:

- improve the food and nutrition security situation
- contribute to the alleviation of rural poverty
- enhance national capacities to manage and respond to risks and threats in the agriculture sector



Contributing to peace-building and conflict prevention efforts, and longer-term development goals

## 5 pillars

1. Institutional Strengthening and Policy Development	2. Efficient Agricultural Production	3. Natural Resource Management and Climate Change Adaptation	4. Value Chain Development and Food Safety	5. Livelihood Protection and Restoration
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## Beneficiaries

- IDPs, refugees, migrants and returnees with no significant income sources, seeking temporary agriculture employment
- Vulnerable communities and host families, comprising marginal and smallholder farming and fishing families, prone to extreme weather events and degradation of natural resources
- Agricultural support service providers, including Government, non-governmental, civil society and private sector partners



Supporting poor, food-insecure people in rural & peri-urban areas

**19 programmes**

(29 subprogrammes)

**5 years**

(April 2014 to 2018)

**3 time tracks**

(overlapping and interlocking)

## Cost estimate USD 145.5 million

- Short term (6–18 months)**  
Emergency relief and agriculture strategy development
- Medium term (1–3 years)**  
Recovery of agricultural livelihoods and agro-ecosystems
- Long term (2.5–5 years)**  
Risk sensitive development of agriculture and rural sectors



Pillar	USD
<b>Programme and subprogramme</b>	
<b>1. Institutional Strengthening and Policy Development</b>	<b>11 380 000</b>
<b>1.1 Support to Agricultural Information Systems</b> (one short-term and one medium-term agricultural statistics and information management subprogramme)	<b>6 380 000</b>
<b>1.2 Support to Stakeholder Capacity Development in the Agriculture Sector</b> (one short-term and one medium-term policy development and institutional strengthening subprogramme)	<b>4 500 000</b>
<b>1.3 Enhanced Forest Policy Development</b> (one short-term subprogramme)	<b>500 000</b>
<b>2. Efficient Agricultural Production</b>	<b>33 735 000</b>
<b>2.1 Sustainable Integrated Water Resources Management</b> (one long-term basin-wide decentralized water management and climate-smart agriculture programme)	<b>16 440 000</b>
<b>2.2 Integrated Pest and Disease Management</b> (one long-term national IPM programme)	<b>4 945 000</b>
<b>2.3 Capacity Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture Research and Development</b> (one short-term and one medium-term institutional strengthening and private sector subprogramme)	<b>2 750 000</b>
<b>2.4 Enhanced Rural and Peri-urban Income Generation and Household Food Nutrition</b> (one medium-term family farming and post-harvest management programme)	<b>9 600 000</b>
<b>3. Natural Resources Management and Agricultural Climate Change Adaptation</b>	<b>29 500 000</b>
<b>3.1 Climate Change Adaptation in Crop Varieties</b> (one medium-term improved seed system subprogramme)	<b>3 600 000</b>
<b>3.2 Sustainable Land Management</b> (one short-term and one medium-term agroforestry, conservation agriculture and disaster risk reduction watershed-based subprogramme)	<b>14 000 000</b>
<b>3.3 Sustainable Fisheries Management</b> (one short-term [repeated annually] and one long-term fish stock assessment and coastal community livelihood subprogramme)	<b>11 900 000</b>
<b>4. Value Chain Development and Food Safety</b>	<b>34 220 000</b>
<b>4.1 Food Safety and Quality Control of Agricultural Inputs</b> (one short-term and one medium-term regulatory and institutional strengthening subprogramme, including support to WTO sanitary and phytosanitary standards and technical barriers to trade)	<b>13 000 000</b>
<b>4.2 Sustainable Post-harvest Management</b> (one medium-term programme for selected agricultural commodities within a value-chain approach)	<b>5 200 000</b>
<b>4.3 Sustainable Livestock Feeding Systems and Dairy Development</b> (one short-term, one medium-term and one long-term local animal feed and dairy production and marketing subprogramme)	<b>12 020 000</b>
<b>4.4 Fisheries and Aquaculture Value Chain Development</b> (one medium-term programme)	<b>4 000 000</b>
<b>5. Livelihood Protection and Restoration</b>	<b>36 650 000</b>
<b>5.1 Food Security and Agriculture Cluster Coordination</b> (one short-term subprogramme [repeated annually under the 2015, 2016 and 2017 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plans])	<b>1 500 000</b>
<b>5.2 Protection of Livelihoods and Restoration of Food Production for Vulnerable and Affected Rural and Peri-urban Populations</b> (one short-term subprogramme [repeated annually under the 2015, 2016 and 2017 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plans])	<b>5 400 000</b>
<b>5.3 Peace Building and Community Resilience</b> (one medium-term employment and income generation programme particularly targeting rural women and youth)	<b>22 500 000</b>
<b>5.4 Emergency Upgrading of the National Desert Locust Control Centre</b> (one short-term subprogramme)	<b>250 000</b>
<b>5.5 Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases</b> (one short-term and one medium-term border area and national subprogramme for the effective surveillance and control of TADs, other livestock diseases and zoonoses and support to improved animal health services; and one regional coordination programme)	<b>7 000 000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>145 485 000</b>



**There is tremendous need, scope and potential to strengthen agriculture in Yemen.**

**Join our efforts.**



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