



9 May 2014

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **2.5 million people need immediate humanitarian assistance**; and one in five Central Africans has been internally displaced. These figures are likely to rise as the conflict places millions at risk of a full-scale food and nutrition security crisis due to low production in 2013 coupled with prevailing chronic countrywide malnutrition, extreme poverty and inappropriate sanitation.
- **The security situation** in Bangui, as well as in the rest of the region is **deteriorating** and a number of attacks on convoys and looting of inputs have been reported. The level of insecurity, as well as inaccessible roads, represents the main challenges as it is hampering the distribution operations causing a delay of 15 days. Nonetheless the distributions will still take place within the current planting season and pre-emptive measures are taken to ensure delivery of agricultural inputs.
- **1.3 million people face crisis** (IPC Phase 3) **and emergency** (IPC phase 4) **levels of food insecurity** (IPC analysis cycle Sept 2013). The IPC updated map is due out in the coming days. This analysis will give updated figures on food insecurity in the Central African Republic.
- **FAO has established strategic partnerships with NGOs** to implement the distribution plan and assist 76 000 farming families countrywide. Each family is receiving 25 kg of crop seeds and 2 hoes to plant in time and produce at least 500 kg of groundnuts, maize and rice that will contribute to feed a family for around four months; 9 500 households have already received agricultural kits.
- The results of the **Markets and Food Security Assessment carried out by FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP)** warns that **the country needs a long and expensive humanitarian operation** over at least the next 18 months to stem the growing toll, and pave the way to rebuild livelihoods.
- **FAO aims to support 150 000 crisis-hit families in CAR** to enable them to produce their own food, protect their scarce resources and earn some income. The success of the 2014 maize, rice, sorghum and millet planting seasons, starting in April and May respectively, will be a turning point for food security.

## BACKGROUND

In light of the findings of the **Multisectoral Initial Rapid Assessment**, the [Revised Strategic Response Plan](#) was launched on 19 January, outlining the humanitarian strategy for the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2014. The **MIRA** confirmed that food reserves are almost non-existent. People interviewed indicated that they were now eating just one meal a day. In spite of insecurity, 78 percent of farmers plan to cultivate in the coming weeks, confirming the importance of cropping and livestock rearing to ensure their income and access to food. However, 94 percent of communities reported they will not have enough seeds to plant for the next agricultural season. People outside Bangui must urgently resume production activities, without which they cannot eat, generate income or even relocate.

The results of the **FAO/WFP Markets and Food Security Assessment mission** released in April indicate that the agricultural sector was the most affected by the crisis, which contracted by 37 percent and agricultural production declined by 38 percent. Representing 57 percent of the GDP, agriculture is the backbone of the economy and it is crucial to restore production. The joint FAO/WFP assessment mission warns that the humanitarian operation in CAR over the next 18 months will be long and expensive, especially if the current planting season is missed.

## CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURE

- ❖ Disruption of market linkages due to insecurity, and production hampered.
- ❖ Insecurity and limited size of the market have increased procurement and logistics costs by 40 percent compared to previous interventions.
- ❖ Standing crops, stored seed/grain and productive assets have been lost, leaving the population food insecure and unable to resume crop production.
- ❖ Rural populations have been affected by the numerous Séléka and anti-Balaka clashes, yet their protection is key in order for FAO and its partners to access the areas where they are located to implement humanitarian and resilience programmes.
- ❖ Lack of immediate assistance will trigger further losses and longer-term suffering.

## PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS

**FAO can prevent further deteriorating of livelihoods and missed planting opportunities** with timely donor support, saving families from a domino effect of continued losses, as well as preventing farmers from adopting negative coping strategies with long-term effects (joining militias and bandits, economic migration, etc.). Restoring productive assets is crucial to enable crisis-hit farmers to produce their own food and take advantage of local opportunities.

### FAO's scaled-up response

In response to the aggravation of the situation in CAR, FAO provided immediate assistance to vegetable producers before the start of the planting season, distributing vegetable kits in February to women's groups and displaced farming families in Bangui from both religious groups. In March, FAO also distributed agricultural kits in Bossangoa for the current agricultural campaign.

In order to respond to the needs of crisis-hit farmers, the Food Security Cluster has finalized a distribution plan for the current agricultural campaign. This includes the distribution tools and 1 800 tonnes of seeds by the end of May 2014.

FAO has established strategic partnerships with NGOs to implement this plan and assist 76 000 farming families countrywide. Each family will receive 25 kg of crop seeds and 2 hoes to plant in time and produce their own food; 9 500 households have already received agricultural kits.

As of 8 May 2014, nearly 75 percent of the seeds and tools purchased by FAO were pre-positioned in FAO hubs across the country (Bangui, Bambari, Bouar and Bossangoa). The remaining seeds will be stocked by 15 May.

Distributions of agricultural kits by FAO's implementing partners have started in the country, and are coupled with food rations distributions from WFP to prevent seed consumption where needed. Rising levels of insecurity on distributions axes are hampering ongoing distributions operations. Preemptive measures are taken with partners to convey seeds and tools safely.

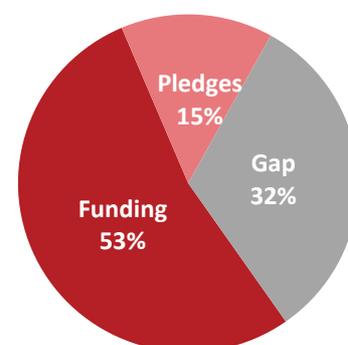
As co-lead of the Food Security Cluster, FAO works closely with partners to improve the food security and livelihoods response. Strategic partnership between FAO and WFP is particularly important to prevent duplications in the crisis response, ensure a greater impact of implemented projects and increase cost-efficiency of both agencies operating in the country.

### FAO priority agricultural assistance

- **Immediate support to vegetable production** so that assisted farmers can harvest vegetables in only six to eight weeks. This support is provided in the most affected regions of the country and in urban and peri-urban areas of Bangui where displaced people are still willing to cultivate their fields during the day and have expressed a need for agricultural inputs to quickly resume food production and sell surplus in local markets to generate some income.
- **Support to the 2014 planting season – a turning point for food security.** Missed planting opportunities can be prevented through timely provision of seeds and complementary inputs such as tools, processing machines and agricultural tools for the 2014 cropping season starting in April.
- **Restore vital rural infrastructure:** linking immediate hunger relief interventions with a long-term strategy for sustainable growth. Cash-for-work provides: (i) much needed income to meet affected families' food needs and protect their scarce resources; while (ii) rebuilding community assets.
- **Peace-building dialogue:** FAO's joint social and economic activities focus on three pillars: farmer field schools, good governance of farmers' groups and access to savings and loan schemes, particularly for women's groups.
- **Post-harvest handling and market linkages:** to stimulate demand and supply in order to revitalize the local economy of vulnerable rural communities.

### Total funding

**FAO total funding needs: USD 45 million**  
**Total funds received: USD 24 million**  
**Total pledges: USD 6.5 million**



**PLANNED  
BENEFICIARIES  
150 000 FAMILIES**

Of the total funds requested by FAO under the Strategic Response Plan (USD 45 million to support 150 000 farming families), FAO has received over USD 24 million<sup>1</sup> and pledges for USD 6.5 million. With funding received FAO has been able to procure around 1 800 tonnes of seeds and small tools to assist 76 000 farming families for the current agricultural season in 14 of the 16 prefectures. However, **an additional USD 14.5 million is still required** to provide livelihood support to the population immediately after the planting season. The objective is to build resilience through activities that will generate regular income before the first harvest, and enable families to purchase food from the market. These activities are not affected by the rainy season and provide opportunities to diversify and accumulate assets on a regular basis year round.

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<sup>1</sup> USD 3 million are committed for activities that are not covered by the SRP: aquaculture, cluster coordination, training, rice irrigation, etc.