

Regional Strategy for the Sahel

1. Overview

The Sahel is facing a large-scale food insecurity and malnutrition crisis that could hit millions of people, particularly from March to August 2012, as a result of severe droughts, poor harvests and rising food prices across the region. Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad, as well as northern Cameroon and northern Nigeria are expected to be affected. An estimated 10 million people are already food insecure in the region, in large part as the result of the 2010 food crisis, and more than 1 million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition. The region is not adequately prepared to manage a new food crisis, with a long history of recurrent droughts and food insecurity having eroded coping mechanisms and left people increasingly more vulnerable.

- Initial assessments show that **food insecurity** is already critical in Niger (with 5.4 million people affected, or 35% of the population), Mali (3 million affected), Burkina Faso (1.67 million affected) and Mauritania (700,000 affected, or 25% of rural households).
- An estimated 226,000 children die each year from **malnutrition** or malnutrition-related causes across the Sahel region. Global acute malnutrition affects 10% to 14% of children in Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso, and more than 15% of children in Chad.

To respond to this looming crisis, humanitarian agencies working in West Africa have developed a region-wide strategy paper entitled '**Response Plan for a Food Security and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel**', under

the leadership of the regional Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The paper was prepared by Action Contre la Faim, FAO, OCHA, WFP and UNICEF, within the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (RFSNWG). The strategy was launched in Dakar on 15 December 2011 and a revised version was issued on 7 February 2012.

2. Objectives and scope of the strategy

In the absence of a West Africa Regional Appeal for 2012, the regional strategy aims to support ongoing efforts to prepare and respond to the 2012 food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel.

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- Strengthen regional preparedness;
- Support a coordinated response and monitor the situation;
- Inform humanitarian appeals in the countries and across the region;
- Raise awareness on the magnitude of this regional crisis;
- Mobilize resources for the response.

DISCLAIMER : This Overview has been prepared by OCHA based on the revised version of the Sahel Strategy, adopted by the regional Inter-Agency standing Committee (IASC) and issued on 7 February 2012. Therefore, figures reflected (funding and other statistics) are those available in the 7 February document, without prejudice to other figures that might have been provided otherwise by humanitarian partners who contributed in the making of the Strategy and might reflect different needs.

The strategy covers Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad, as well northern Cameroon and northern Nigeria. It takes into account the national response plans developed by the Governments of Burkina Faso (for CFA70 billion, or US\$140 million), Mali (for CFA 77 billion, or US\$ 154 million), Mauritania (for ouguiyas 45 billion, or \$ 160 million), and Niger (for CFA 160 billion, or \$320 million), as well as the 2012 Consolidated Appeals for Chad (for a total of \$ 455 million) and Niger (for a total of \$ 229 million).

The document also suggests that the current vulnerabilities in the Sahel cannot be overcome through humanitarian aid alone. To prevent the recurrence of the crises in the region, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive approach to resilience and mobilize sufficient funding to support longer-term projects that tackle the underlying structural causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.

3. Response plan

The strategy outlines concrete interventions in the areas of food insecurity and malnutrition, along with an overview of the financial requirements to mitigate the effects of the crisis. The strategy also informs detailed individual response plans of agencies, including WFP, UNICEF and FAO.

Food insecurity

Humanitarian agencies plan to support households through direct food assistance and cash transfers, and to strengthen livelihoods in the medium term through agricultural and pastoralist support.

- **January-March 2012:** Assistance to the most affected households through direct food assistance and cash transfers. Agencies will also strengthen their emergency stockpiles in key countries.
- **April-October 2012:** In addition to continued food assistance and cash transfers, organizations will support livelihoods through a series of projects in the areas of agricultural production, pastoralist support and the management of natural resources.

Malnutrition

Humanitarian agencies plan to reduce mortality and permanent damage caused by acute malnutrition through an integrated set of interventions on nutrition, health, water and sanitation, as well as behavioural changes.

- **Early diagnosis and effective treatments** to support children and pregnant and lactating women with acute malnutrition in communities and health facilities.
- **Food assistance (blanket feeding)** for children aged 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women in areas where the prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition exceeds 15 per cent, areas of high risks of deterioration of the nutrition situation, or areas where treatment centres are inexistent.
- **Integrated package of nutrition rehabilitation and prevention**, including promoting appropriate feeding practices and preventing water-borne diseases and malaria.
- **Coordinated approach** to harmonize the nutritional strategies across the region, and stronger follow-up and monitoring in order to improve the effectiveness of nutrition interventions.

DISCLAIMER : This Overview has been prepared by OCHA based on the revised version of the Sahel Strategy, adopted by the regional Inter-Agency standing Committee (IASC) and issued on 7 February 2012. Therefore, figures reflected (funding and other statistics) are those available in the 7 February document, without prejudice to other figures that might have been provided otherwise by humanitarian partners who contributed in the making of the Strategy and might reflect different needs.

4. Financial requirements

In total, humanitarian agencies require **US\$724 million** to respond to the food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel. This includes:

- **\$480 million** to address the **food security** needs of more than 12 million people across the region. However, this figure represents a cumulative number of beneficiaries; for instance, beneficiaries of general food distributions might also receive seeds and tools.
- **\$243 million** for **nutrition interventions** across the region, including more than 1 million children suffering from severe acute malnutrition and more than 2 million children suffering from moderate acute malnutrition.

5. Overview of affected populations and financial requirements

Affected populations:

Country	Populations vulnerable to food insecurity	Expected Severe Acute Malnutrition Caseload
Niger	5,458,000	331,000
Chad	1,600,000 (CAP 2012)	127,300
Mali	3,000,000	175,000
Burkina Faso	1,670,000	99,200
Nigeria (north)	To be determined	207,700
Mauritania	700,000	12,600
Senegal (north)	850,000 (figure currently being validated)	20,000
Cameroon (north)	To be determined	55,100
Total Sahel	Approx, 12 million – cumulative figure of beneficiaries	1,027,900

DISCLAIMER : This Overview has been prepared by OCHA based on the revised version of the Sahel Strategy, adopted by the regional Inter-Agency standing Committee (IASC) and issued on 7 February 2012. Therefore, figures reflected (funding and other statistics) are those available in the 7 February document, without prejudice to other figures that might have been provided otherwise by humanitarian partners who contributed in the making of the Strategy and might reflect different needs.

Financial requirements for the response, in US\$:

Country	Food security	Nutrition	Total
Niger	109,143,346	83,944,664	193,088,010
Chad	145,518,871	33,114,892	178,633,763
Mali	72,183,131	46,637,609	119,820,740
Burkina Faso	47,570,600	27,696,508	75,267,108
Nigeria (north)	To be determined	17,122,689	To be determined
Mauritania	54,068,269	11,242,726	65,310,995
Senegal (north)	39,830,290	8,453,528	48,283,818
Cameroun (north)	11,464,200	15,428,094	26,892,294
	Regional approach (analysis, advocacy and support for national projects): 1,127,500		
Total Sahel	480,906,207	243,640,710	724,546,917

DISCLAIMER : This Overview has been prepared by OCHA based on the revised version of the Sahel Strategy, adopted by the regional Inter-Agency standing Committee (IASC) and issued on 7 February 2012. Therefore, figures reflected (funding and other statistics) are those available in the 7 February document, without prejudice to other figures that might have been provided otherwise by humanitarian partners who contributed in the making of the Strategy and might reflect different needs.