



**Niger Food Crisis 2005
Situation Report n°6
22 – 31 August- 31 2005**

HIGHLIGHTS

- United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan ended on 24 August a two-day visit to Niger aimed at taking stock of the humanitarian assistance in Niger to feed millions of thousands in need of food aid. UNSG Annan highlighted the importance of providing aid immediately to the vulnerable, and at the same time identifying medium and long term solutions against food crises.
- On the eve of Annan's visit, Medecins Sans Frontières said in a statement that food distributions were not reaching those most in need, and suggested that a review of the distribution mechanism so that "forgotten" villages are taken into account.
- As of 31 August, 2.7 million people were in need of food aid.
- WFP started a humanitarian air service.

I. NATIONAL OVERVIEW

1.1 Social and political overview

The political situation remains calm. The food crisis continues to be well reported in the national media.

1.2 Environmental overview

The Ministry of Agricultural Development reported the presence of individual locusts and caterpillars in the areas Zinder (east), Dosso (South-eastern of Niamey) and Tillabéry (North-eastern of Niamey). Grasshoppers also have been reported in the departments of Diffa, Mayahi, and Tanout, and the presence of plant-eating birds in the farming areas. In its 20 August information bulletin, the Ministry reports that land and aerial surveillance will continue, particularly in areas where conditions are favorable to the development of locusts.

Abundant rains continued in the farm areas located in the south during the reporting period. In the area of Tillabery, 26 out of 30 rain stations recorded rain surpluses, in comparison to the same period in 2004. The regions of Dosso, Maradi and Tahoua also recorded high quantities of rain.

II. HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

2.1 Food security / Nutrition

As of 31 August, 2.7 million people were in need of food aid. Nearly 900.00 were in an "extremely critical" situation, and 90.000 in difficult situation. The remaining population is in a situation that requires close monitoring. WFP and the UNICEF, in collaboration with NGOs, continue their first round of general food distributions which, as of August 28, distributed 10,240 tons of food to close 600.000 people. The first round started on 8 August for a target population of 1.89 million people. The second is expected to start mid-September and would target of 1.7 million. Following the concerns raised by Medecins Sans Frontieres that some vulnerable population were left out of the distribution plans, UN agencies have begun discussions on improving the existing mechanism and ensuring that food reaches those who are in need.

307 therapeutic feeding centers (TFC) are currently operational in the country. According to partners active in the sector, the figure could double to reach 760 by the end of the year, and that the number of children admitted could reach 200,000. More than 54,000 children were admitted in TFCs between the 1 July and on 31 August.

1st Round General Distributions - Dispatches as of 27 August 2005			
Partner	Region	Beneficiaries	MTs
ABC Ecologie	Tillaberi	79,304	1,359
CARE	Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua	94,068	1,612
CRS	Tillaberi	10,154	174
Caritas	Tillaberi	8,753	150
GOAL	Zinder	48,551	832
HELP	Tillaberi	51,527	883
IFRC	Agadez	11,613	199
PDR/ADM	Tahoua	175,122	3,001
World Vision	Maradi, Zinder	127,447	2,184
		606,538	10,394

Source: WFP brief, 30 August 2005

WFP EMOP 10398.0	
	Metric Tons
Receipts as of 27 August	
In transit	32,842
Arrived in Niger	20,845
Total	53,687
Dispatched as of 27 August	
	15,632

2.2 Agriculture

The Food Crisis office (Cellule de Crise Alimentaire) estimates that 85% of millet and sorghum fields will have an output varying from "medium" to "good" when the harvest starts in late September, representing an increase of 15 points compared to 2004.

2.3 Health

The Ministry for Health has recorded 184 cases of cholera, including 18 deaths, since July 13, all in the localities of Bouza, Birni Konni and Madaoua in the area of Tahoua (400km north-east of Niamey). With the assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO), the medical authorities have conducted surveillance and monitoring, carried out information and awareness campaigns, as well as the chlorination of the sources and points of water.

According to the Ministry for Health, nearly 600,000 cases of malaria could be reported in the country between now and the end of year. Niger is currently in the midst of its high transmission. UNICEF is

supporting the Government through a campaign to re-impregnate one million mosquito nets, representing 500,000 households.

UNICEF has started a capacity-building programme for hospital personnel Niamey and Tillabery to better treat severe and moderate malnutrition cases. The programme included the training of 25 hospital staff, the supply of medical material and free access for malnourished children to the main hospital in Niamey.

The Government and UNFPA signed an agreement through which UNFPA would grant 178 million francs CFA to the Government to combat the effects of the food crisis in the areas of Zinder and Agadez. This sum would be used for the purchase of medical supplies and food for pregnant or nursing women.

2.4 Water and Sanitation

The Ministry of Hydraulics and Environment and its partners have launched an information and awareness campaign to promote proper personal hygiene and food safety habits, two factors that can accelerate contracting water-borne diseases such as cholera. The campaign relies mainly on radio stations including those who broadcast in local dialects in order to reach the greatest number of people. During the last coordination meeting of the water and sanitation group, the Ministry appealed to international NGOs to assist in rehabilitating water points that have broken down or malfunctioning in the areas of Maradi, Tahoua, Zinder and Dosso.

2.5 Cost Recovery

UNDP and other UN agencies, the World Bank, the French and Belgian cooperation agencies presented to the Government the *Fond de Solidarité- Santé de Proximité*, a health project that aims to improve access to health care and services to the children less than 5 years and pregnant and nursing women. If adopted by the Government, the project will require USD 5 millions to run an initial pilot phase of six months.

III. COORDINATION

Coordination mechanisms continue to be put in place and to be improved through working groups. Although it is Niger's first experience with humanitarian coordination under the assistance of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), all the actors are succeeding in identifying critical needs and defining strategic responses to resolve the crisis. Coordination meetings are held on a weekly basis. The UN continues to reinforce its presence in Niger through the deployment of staff specialized in various activities. On Wednesday 31 August, The Humanitarian Coordinator briefed the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on the latest developments, and emphasized, among other things, the UN's plan to improve coordination so that food goes to those who are in need. FAO is leading discussions in view of establishing an additional working group "Agriculture and Farming."

WFP inaugurated on August 29 a humanitarian air service, a working tool that will facilitate humanitarian activities in this vast country. Humanitarian actors will be able to travel to the regions of Tahoua, Agadez, Maradi, and Zinder.

IV. ADVOCACY/DONOR RELATIONS/ COMMUNICATION

The UNSG's visit received wide media coverage from the national and international media journalists. While local journalists continue to report on the situation, the presence of the foreign press has been significantly reduced in comparison to past weeks.

Over the last ten days, the Humanitarian Coordinator granted interviews to BBC-English service, and VOA-French service. He also gave an interview to Islam Channel, a private broadcaster based in London. The interview will form part of a 30-minute documentary on the situation in Niger that the channel will

broadcast by the end of the month of September. A weekly press briefing, open to all journalists, is held each Thursday at 12:30 pm local time (11:30 GMT) by the HC. At the end of a mission to Niger, the Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Jean-Jacques Grais, urged the international community to continue funding the crisis so that agencies could continue saving lives.

The Centre D'Information Humanitaire (CIH) is operational and shares an office with OCHA behind PAM in Niamey. The HIC is a common service to the humanitarian community working in Niger and supports the coordination of humanitarian assistance through the provision of information products and services. Reporting directly to the Humanitarian Coordinator, the CIH facilitates information exchange among all humanitarian actors, including among UN agencies, government and other national entities, donor governments and agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations and civil society. This CIH is currently collecting information from actors in the field on specific areas of vulnerability and gaps in assistance in an attempt to create maps that can be used to direct the humanitarian response.

The CIH website is up and running and is in the process of being translated into French. Visit www.humanitarianinfo.org/Niger in order to find the most recent Situation Reports, Assessments and Bulletins from the different agencies involved in supporting the Food Crisis. If you have information to share with the CIH or you would like to be included in the CIH Contacts Directory please send an email to cihniger.liaison@un.org.

V. FUNDING

Following an appeal for USD 80 millions that was launched in early August, UN agencies have received USD 40 millions. Thus there is a 50% financing gap that UN agencies are urging to fill so that humanitarian assistance can be delivered to millions of people, particularly children. For the latest figures on financial contributions please visit www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc105?OpenForm&rc=1&cc=ner

AGENDA

Tableau des réunions de coordination

DATE	MEETING	TIME	LOCATION	FOCAL POINT/ CONTACT
Monday	Water and Sanitation	16h 00	UNICEF	Pierre Hassan Sanon psanon@un.org tel. 723008
Tuesday	UNCT	9 :00	UNDP	Humanitarian Coordinator
	Coordination meeting- WFP and partners	15 :30	WFP	Yvon A. Edoumou edoumou@un.org Tel.574133
	Information/ Communication (UN agencies)	16h 00	OCHA	
Wednesday	Health	16h 00	WHO	Rene Coddy coddyz@ne.afro.who.int tel. 752133
Thursday	General Coordination meeting	10h 00	Prime Minister's Office	Seydou Bakari cca-pm@intnet.ne Tel. 723578
	Weekly press briefing by Humanitarian Coordinator	12h 30	UNDP	Yvon A. Edoumou edoumou@un.org Tel.574133
Friday	Nutrition	16h 00	UNICEF	Karine Coudert kcoudert@unicef.org tel. 871941

To be included on or taken off the distribution list for the Humanitarian Situation Reports for Niger, or to contribute to the next report, kindly contact: OCHA Information Officer Yvon edoumou on edoumou@un.org

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