



IN NUMBERS



9.3 million

in severe acute food insecurity



6.2 million

internally displaced people (IDPs)



USD 141 million

still needed by FAO for 2020

KEY MESSAGES

- Conflict, displacement, returns, limited livelihood opportunities and a major economic crisis following the collapse of the Syrian Pound are the main drivers of humanitarian need.
- A total of 9.3 million people are facing severe acute food insecurity, and an additional 1.9 million people are at risk of food insecurity.
- The number of internally displaced people (IDP) rose to 6.2 million, the largest population of IDPs in the world. Concurrently, displaced people have begun to return to their land and are facing serious challenges in resuming their production. Returnees require support, including provision of agricultural inputs, infrastructure rehabilitation and veterinary services. Without support, returnees may be forced to leave their land again.
- The impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, particularly movement restrictions and curfews, are likely to significantly worsen the food security and livelihoods situation.
- Of the USD 155 million requested for 2020 to assist 11.72 million people, FAO still requires USD 141 million, including in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

The crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic has entered its tenth year, and the humanitarian needs continue to be extraordinarily high. Conflict, displacement, returns and the destruction of agricultural infrastructure have severely affected Syrians livelihoods and food security. The current economic crisis is worsening the situation, and the poverty rate is increasing. In the past six months the number of food insecure people rose dramatically from 7.9 million in January to 9.3 million in June, and an additional 1.9 million people are at risk of food insecurity.

The announcement of a cease fire in March in the northwest quelled airstrikes, but needs there remain high as result of prolonged conflict, which led to the internal displacement of 1 million people from Idleb Governorate since December 2019. Internally displaced people are particularly vulnerable, and 30 percent of internally-displaced children in the northwest are stunted.

The impact of the crisis has become worse due to a combination of factors, including the control measures, particularly movement and transportation restrictions, implemented by the Government to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The large, unexpected increase in the exchange rate is another significant factor. As a result, there has been an increase in the adaption of irreversible coping strategies, which are negatively impacting the food security.

CHALLENGES FACING FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

The number of food insecure people is anticipated to increase in 2020 due to lack of livelihood opportunities and high food prices despite a positive forecast for cereal production. Though there remains a lack of functional agricultural infrastructure that continues to constrain production, the 2020 cereal production projection is favorable. The wheat production forecast for 2020 is 2.4 million tonnes, up from 2.2 million tonnes in 2019, but still below the pre-crisis level of 4.1 million tonnes (2002-2011). Yet, high temperatures in May have reduced wheat grain size. Barley production is projected to be high in 2020, with a forecast of 2.3 million tonnes, which is more than double the pre-crisis average.

The consequences of COVID-19 control measures are impacting the agriculture sector, reducing accessibility to markets and leading to higher prices for inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, fuel and labor. Increasing input and production costs combined with decreasing purchasing power is shrinking farmer's profits. This may result in smallholders dropping out of agricultural production if the situation, which is constantly changing, is not addressed rapidly.

Livestock has been the most affected sector by the COVID-19 control measures. Livestock keepers cannot afford to buy the required standard quantities of cattle feed, which will eventually affect productivity. Sheep and goat keepers face limited access to grazing lands as well as high feed prices. In the poultry sector, producers of broilers and eggs are experiencing challenges in securing inputs, consequently creating massive fluctuations in the prices of broilers and eggs.

Food processors are also facing higher costs of raw materials, transportation, fuel and skilled labor. As a result, processors have been forced to raise prices of their final food products by 20 percent on average to maintain quality, sufficient supplies and good distribution in national markets.

Finally, consumers are constrained by their limited purchasing power, and the significant price increases are reducing the demand for food commodities. In markets, consumers are buying fewer vegetables and fruit, often buying items by the piece rather than in bulk in kilograms or boxes, and lamb meat has become an expensive luxury. To overcome the difficulties in meeting food needs, purchasing food on credit is becoming more prevalent.

FAO RESPONSE, TARGETS AND FUNDING

2020 PRIORITIES



1.5 million people (250 000 households) targeted



155 000 households will benefit from livestock production support through peste des petits ruminants (PPR) vaccinations, antiparasite treatments, rehabilitation of laboratories and distribution of feed



30 000 households will benefit from distributions of wheat and vegetable seed, seed multiplication activities, rehabilitation of fruit sapling nurseries and capacity building on good agriculture practices



55 000 households will benefit from improved access to water through rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure, water harvesting systems and waste-water treatment plants as well as the sustainable management of water resources



5 000 households will benefit from rural employment opportunities, and the engagement of women and youth in agricultural production will be increased through training, provision of inputs and support in food processing, entrepreneurship and marketing



2 000 households will benefit from improved technical capacity on project management, marketing, good agricultural practices, statistical analysis and early warning systems through training using the farmer field school and farmer business school approach



3 000 households will benefit from improved nutrition through school gardens and nutrition awareness raising sessions and education

2020 RESPONSE TO DATE



345 294 people (57 549 households) directly assisted



Provided animal feed to **4 200 households** to increase production and protect livestock assets



Distributed vegetable seed to **8 800 households** and established nurseries to increase the availability of vegetables in local communities and improve nutrition of vulnerable households, particularly female-headed households



Vaccinated livestock belonging to **41 644 households** against PPR to improve animal health and increase livestock productivity



Improved access to water to **844 households** through infrastructure rehabilitation and installation of alternative energy sources

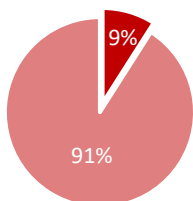


Increased availability of improved seed to farmers through multiplication of early generation seed, directly benefiting **120 households**



Trained **1 941 people** representing their households on agricultural technical subjects as well as entrepreneurship, marketing and project management

FUNDING 2020



- Funding to-date: USD 14 million
- Funding gap: USD 141 million

COORDINATION

FAO is working with the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food programme to strengthen coordination, avoid overlaps in response and conduct assessments, including the ongoing assessment analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on poverty.

Resource partners: Department for International Development, European Union, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Russian Federation, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

FAO requires: USD 155 million **To assist:** 11.72 million people

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