



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## NATIONAL RESPONSE PROGRAMME LIBERIA

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# EBOLA

VIRUS DISEASE  
OUTBREAK



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## CONTEXT

The rapid spread of Ebola virus disease in Liberia led the Government to declare a state of emergency and enact special measures to control the outbreak, including the closure of borders and schools and the temporary closure of some major food markets in the most affected areas. These measures, compounded by fear of transmission, have intensified the impacts of the outbreak on already vulnerable communities, negatively affecting their food security and livelihoods.

In mid-September 2014, a rapid fact-finding mission conducted by FAO in Lofa County (northwest Liberia) concluded that there will be a significant risk of increased food insecurity and an impact on livelihoods in the forthcoming months. The following three main impacts of EVD on food security have been identified:

- An estimated 10 to 25 percent reduction in crop production in the most affected areas as a result of the lack of attention and field presence during July and August, when the country was in a state of emergency.
- A sharp increase in prices of food and other commodities from August to October 2014, followed by stabilization: The disruption of road transportation and markets contributed to soaring food prices almost immediately. From July to October 2014, the price of rice in Lofa was 40 percent higher than the year prior, and the prices of certain types of fish had increased five-fold.
- Depletion of households' and women's associations' savings: Market closures and movement restrictions reduced participation in income-generating activities and led women to use the little savings they had to cover basic needs, causing them to increase their debt. Women were unable to pay back the loans they received in June and July 2014 from their savings and loans associations. The collapse of these women-managed savings and loans schemes will have a significant impact on food security and nutrition at community and household levels, as well as on the local economy.

## STRATEGIC RESPONSE

The most urgent concerns expressed by the women and men interviewed were the imminent threat of virus transmission and the revitalization of their livelihood activities, especially in regards to community savings and loans schemes. Communities have not been sufficiently educated on virus transmission, which prevents them from continuing their livelihood activities. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop local capacities within communities to continue to contribute to the prevention of the spread of EVD while avoiding damage to the local economy. It is crucial to develop cash transfer programmes to assist women's' associations in reactivating their local group and household activities through savings and loans mechanisms. Conditional cash transfer activities have been proposed within the communities and Ministries of Agriculture and Gender in order to support Ebola awareness campaigns and lowland agricultural production.

This National Response Programme is in line with FAO's overall response strategy and is part of the Regional Response Programme to the EVD outbreak in West Africa.

**FAO is appealing for a total of USD 10 million to assist nearly 25 000 farming households most affected by the outbreak in Liberia.**

**1 SAVE LIVES BY STOPPING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE**

FAO REGIONAL RESPONSE STRATEGY		FAO STRATEGIC OUTPUTS IN LIBERIA	USD
Output 1.1	Disease spread controlled in affected countries and prevented in at-risk countries	- 2 500 women's associations (approximately 50 000 women) are trained on and engaged in Ebola sensitization to share their information with neighbouring communities on a longer-term basis. Cash transfers will be used to implement this activity in order to reactivate savings and loans schemes.	2 000 000
Output 1.2	Preparedness and response capacities improved at national and regional levels	- Preparedness and response capacities are improved.	500 000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>2 500 000</b>

**2 BOOST INCOMES AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TO SAFEGUARD LIVELIHOODS**

FAO REGIONAL RESPONSE STRATEGY		FAO STRATEGIC OUTPUTS IN LIBERIA	USD
Output 2.2	Food and nutrition security ensured or restored	- Lowland rice and vegetable production boosted during the upcoming dry season. Cash transfers will be used to implement this activity (lowland rehabilitation) in order to reactivate savings and loans schemes.	1 500 000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1 500 000</b>

**3 BUILD RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES TO DISEASE THREATS**

FAO REGIONAL RESPONSE STRATEGY		FAO STRATEGIC OUTPUTS IN LIBERIA	USD
Output 3.3	Best practices in emergency response to EVD promoted	- Capitalize on approaches based on the farmer field school methodology, where group members have implemented conditions to access savings and loans, and draw lessons, identify gaps and develop road maps for next steps. - Financial capital of women's associations' saving and loans schemes revitalized through conditional cash transfer mechanisms (for EVD sensitization and agricultural production). - Training of an additional 2 000 women's association on savings and loans mechanisms to diversify their sources of income and increase their resilience.	5 000 000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>5 000 000</b>

**4 STRENGTHEN COORDINATION FOR IMPROVED RESPONSE**

FAO REGIONAL RESPONSE STRATEGY		FAO STRATEGIC OUTPUTS IN LIBERIA	USD
Output 4.1	Regional and national actions coordinated for effective rapid response	- Ensure evidence-based decision making by stakeholders (NGOs, ministries and the UN system) through continuous monitoring and food security/nutrition assessments.	1 000 000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1 000 000</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>10 000 000</b>

## IMPLEMENTATION MODALITY

FAO possesses significant experience with similar comprehensive approaches integrating social, agricultural and technical aspects and capacities in other countries, engaging farmers' associations and women's associations – including farmer field schools – in savings and loans schemes, which facilitate economic and social investment (such as sending girls to school), the implementation of good agricultural practices and nutrition surveillance, thereby promoting a culture of responsibility and resilience among communities. The implementation of the proposed activities will be directly supported by the FAO Resilience Hub for West Africa with the operational and technical support from the FAO Regional Office for Africa and FAO headquarters.

FAO envisages collaborating and partnering with all ministries (including the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock, Health, Gender and Trade) and relevant stakeholders working across the entire food chain, in addition to fostering strong partnerships with the United Nations system (UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN) and Non-governmental Organizations such as CARE International and ZOA.

## GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE AND BENEFICIARIES

A total of 25 000 households will be targeted in the affected areas, where an estimated 2.4 million people live. Affected counties include Lofa and Montserrado – considered EVD's epicenter – as well as Bomi, Bong, Margibi, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Margibi, Maryland, Nimba, Rivercess, River Gee and Sinoe. An additional 60 000 households will indirectly benefit from training on savings and loans.

Priority will be given to the following:

- populations directly affected by the outbreak such as contact persons and their families residing in counties nearby the most affected areas; and
- vulnerable populations such as traders and producers who have been indirectly affected by the Ebola outbreak



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