

USAID/OFDA AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY SECTOR UPDATE – OCTOBER 2011

SECTOR OVERVIEW

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) supports agriculture and food security initiatives that address the immediate humanitarian needs of affected populations, strengthen local capacity to respond to disasters, and increase communities' resilience to future emergencies. Following a crisis, USAID/OFDA often works with farmers to rehabilitate agricultural infrastructure and facilitate economic recovery through the restoration of agricultural livelihoods. USAID/OFDA provides technical assistance to strategically reduce agricultural hazards worldwide and supports livestock, fisheries, pest control, veterinary medicine, and seed system and agricultural input programs. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$88 million to support agriculture and food security activities in 28 countries, as well as regional agriculture and food security projects in west, east, and southern Africa.

RESPONDING TO NEEDS OF DROUGHT-AFFECTED POPULATIONS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

USAID/OFDA provided more than \$10.8 million in FY 2011 to support agricultural and food security programs in drought-affected areas of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia. In addition to meeting acute needs resulting from the drought in the Horn of Africa, USAID/OFDA supports longer-standing programs that help build the communities' resilience to future disasters.

In Kenya, for instance, USAID/OFDA is responding to acute, drought-related needs by supporting emergency agriculture and food security activities, including the distribution of agricultural inputs and livestock feed, commercial destocking, rehabilitation of water points for livestock use, and training farmers in improved agricultural techniques to help maximize crop production during the October to December rainy season. In addition, USAID/OFDA continues to support long-standing resiliency-building programs in Kenya. For example, USAID/OFDA supports a three-year, \$15 million program that helps pastoralists and smallholder farmers diversify their income sources. In addition, by training community animal health workers to conduct livestock disease surveillance and provide improved veterinary services, the program is helping protect families' current assets. Through this program and others like it, USAID/OFDA is helping build the communities' resilience to future disasters.

PROVIDING AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT IN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

USAID/OFDA continues to support agricultural programs that increase the capacity of conflict-affected populations in Sudan to respond to shocks, such as droughts or floods. In total, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$24 million for agriculture and food security programs in Sudan and South Sudan in FY 2011. USAID/OFDA-funded activities included training of agricultural extension workers and community animal



A woman in South Sudan uses USAID/OFDA-provided agricultural inputs on her farm (Photo by Jane Strachan, USAID).

health workers and distribution of seeds and tools to farmers in order to increase sustainable food production among rural, conflict-affected communities.

For example, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$1.4 million to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to conduct food security and livelihoods assessments in Sudan, including pre- and post-harvest conditions and livestock vaccination effectiveness, and to provide emergency assistance and early recovery support to vulnerable households. In addition, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$2.5 million to Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) to improve agriculture and livestock livelihood opportunities among rural communities in Sudan, specifically targeting returnees, internally displaced persons, and populations affected by flooding during the ongoing rainy season. NPA has partnered with the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) to monitor

weather conditions and provide farmers with advice on mitigating climate shocks. USAID/OFDA also supported a Seed System Security Assessment for Southern Sudan in December of 2010, in which more than 10 partners participated. The assessment revealed that many of the prevailing assumptions on needs and how farmers source seed need to be revised as relief agencies provide support in the area.

ASSESSING NEEDS TO INFORM APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES

Disasters—particularly droughts or floods—often result in food insecurity among affected populations. However, disasters do not necessarily disrupt the supply of agricultural inputs, as is often assumed. Since food shortages can occur despite adequate seed supplies, USAID/OFDA has long promoted the need for careful assessment of seed need, separate from analysis of harvests or grain stocks. Recent USAID/OFDA-supported activities have allowed for increased seed system analysis at the country level through Seed System Security Assessments (SSSAs). Since 2001, USAID/OFDA has collaborated with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to improve seed system assessments and increase the efficacy and cost efficiency of seed-based responses to agricultural disasters. Since designing a methodology to allow for assessment of seed systems, CIAT researcher Dr. Louise Sperling has conducted country- and region-wide assessments in Haiti, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe; SSSA results significantly altered the course of humanitarian interventions in response to the Haiti Earthquake, the complex emergencies in Southern Sudan, and the disruption and droughts in Zimbabwe. SSSAs allow USAID/OFDA to respond more efficiently and ensure that relief efforts do not negatively impact market development. A recent seed system assessment was just completed in drought-affected areas of Kenya, where USAID/OFDA continues to provide assistance to affected populations.

REDUCING POST-HARVEST LOSS

To reduce annual post-harvest losses, USAID/OFDA sponsored an Annual Program Statement (APS) aimed at improving household- or community-level seed storage interventions. Through the APS, USAID/OFDA provided \$1.2 million to support five 12- to 18- month programs in five countries that addressed the main causes of post-harvest seed loss—such as moisture and pest infestation—through introducing innovations to traditional seed storage models or piloting new models. To be eligible, the applicants were required to target areas where farmers currently lose more than 20 percent of their harvest during storage.

PROVIDING PEST INFESTATION PREVENTION AND MITIGATION SUPPORT

Locust and several other agricultural pest infestations destroy hundreds of thousands of hectares of crops each year, significantly impacting food security and livelihoods for vulnerable populations in more than 65 countries throughout Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. To minimize the impacts of and strengthen community capacity to prevent and respond to pest infestations, USAID/OFDA supports an FAO disaster risk reduction initiative that trains community members to identify and monitor pest breeding areas, safely apply and manage pesticide materials, implement effective pest-control interventions, and develop strategies to prevent recurring infestations. FAO also provides pest monitoring equipment, transportation of community members and equipment to pest breeding grounds, and assistance for safe disposal of empty pesticide containers. To prevent pesticide-related illnesses and fatalities and minimize environmental contamination, USAID/OFDA supports the use of bio-pesticides and environmental monitoring of pesticide-affected areas. In FY 2011, USAID/OFDA provided an additional \$2 million to FAO for infestation prevention and mitigation activities in Madagascar, where 500,000 hectares of crops were vulnerable to locust infestation, according to FAO.



Young adult locusts consume millet crops in Mali (Photo by Yene Belayneh, USAID).

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