

USAID Assistance to Niger and the Sahel

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 10, 2005

2005-15

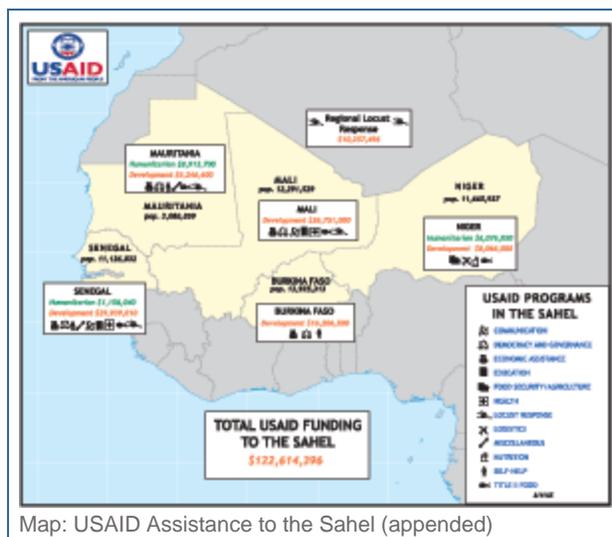
Press Office: 202-712-4320

Public Information: 202-712-4810

SAHEL HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW

The U.S. Government has responded quickly and generously to food insecurity and development challenges in the Sahel region of Africa, including Niger. In fiscal year 2005, the U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided more than \$122 million from the American people to programs that will help improve lives in the Sahel and is working closely with the U.N., the governments of the Sahel and other donor governments. These total funds represent direct assistance to the people of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.

The more than 65 million people in the nine Sahelian countries – Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal – are among the poorest and least food secure in the world. The region is marked by high rates of deforestation, soil degradation, erosion and population growth, as well as by weak political and private sector institutions. USAID provides support to the Sahelian countries through bilateral and regional assistance.



Map: USAID Assistance to the Sahel (appended)

- NIGER-SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE FOR FOOD INSECURITY** On October 19, U.S. Charge d'Affaires John Davison issued a disaster declaration due to the combined effects of the drought and locusts affecting Niger. This action was the first official humanitarian aid response for Niger food insecurity, issued more than a month before the first UN international appeal. On Friday, August 5, the U.S. Government airlifted 206 metric tons (MT) of special, high-nutrient food supplement to Niger to immediately help feed more than 34,000 at-risk children through UNICEF. The airlifts are in addition to more than 16,000 metric tons of USAID Title II food assistance provided this fiscal year to people in some of the most food insecure regions in Niger. To date, the total amount of U.S. support to battle food insecurity in Niger this year is approximately \$14.1 million.
- HOW USAID WORKS IN THE SAHEL.** The USAID-supported West Africa Regional Program (WARP) handles West African development challenges that are most effectively addressed at a regional level. WARP works closely with other USAID missions in the region, including USAID's bilateral missions in Mali and Senegal, and U.S. embassies in countries where USAID does not have a mission. The Sahelian countries benefit from WARP through their membership in such organizations as the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel. Overall, WARP supports activities in 19 West African countries, nine of which are in the Sahel. Program activities focus on economic development and trade, health improvement, food security, agricultural growth, and peace and stability. Further funding from the Presidential Initiative to End Hunger in Africa is being used to implement the new regional market information system that will supply timely agricultural pricing information to farmers and traders. To date, WARP's program totals approximately \$40 million.

- **USAID RESPONDS TO LOCUST CRISIS IN THE SAHEL** Good rains in the northern Sahara south of the Atlas Mountains in late 2003 and early 2004 created favorable climactic conditions for increased locust breeding levels throughout Sahelian West Africa. USAID has monitored and responded to the locust situation since 2003 through its Assistance for Emergency Locust and Grasshopper Activity and Famine Early Warning System Network. During the height of the infestations in the fall of 2004, USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team to some of the most severely affected areas. According to the U.N., the locust and drought shocks have affected more than 3.6 million people. USAID's Regional Disaster Office has made several trips to each of the Sahelian countries since November 2004 to monitor the effects of drought and locusts.

-
- **Sahel/Locust Emergency:** In 2004, locust invasions destroyed many crops and immense swaths of pastureland in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions of the Sahel. Although early findings indicated that the infestation would not seriously affect regional crop production, subsequent droughts and a reduced harvest contributed to high, localized food insecurity in parts of the Sahel and West Africa. In fiscal year 2005, USAID provided more than \$10 million to fund locust eradication programs in the Sahel. An additional \$3.5 million in assistance for the locust emergency in Mali and Senegal is reported under the USAID assistance to those two countries. Projects included aerial spraying of 383,000 hectares and assistance to regional responders across North and West Africa.

Total FY 2005 USAID Assistance for Locust Emergency - \$10,257,496

- **Burkina Faso:** According to the U.N., more than 500,000 people will require food assistance in fiscal year 2005 due to droughts. The U.N. also reports that citizens of Burkina Faso are implementing lean season coping mechanisms, such as migrating in search of food. USAID focuses the majority of its assistance to Burkina Faso on combating food insecurity. U.S. Government assistance also funds programs that support local human rights, community based development activities, political party development and technical assistance for upcoming elections. In addition, USAID has provided 24,240 metric tons of development food commodities in fiscal year 2005.

Total FY 2005 USAID Assistance to Burkina Faso - \$16,206,500

- **Mali:** USAID's development program in Mali works to expand economic opportunities, particularly for the rural poor; provides high impact health services to improve the health and welfare of women and children, mitigates the spread of HIV/AIDS, improves the quality of basic education, consolidates democracy through support of decentralization and accelerates overall development by making information more widely accessible. To achieve these goals, USAID/Mali's fiscal year 2005 program totals more than \$35 million. According to the World Food Program, the food crisis in Mali currently affects 2.2 million people, 20 percent of the country's population. Approximately 5,000 children experience acute malnutrition, and the infant mortality rate has reached record levels in certain parts of the country. In fiscal year 2005, USAID provided 1,710 MT of development food commodities and in response to the 2004-2005 locust invasion, USAID provided more than \$2.8 million in assistance to Mali. U.S. Government assistance also funds programs that support human rights and community based development activities.

Total FY 2005 USAID Assistance to Mali - \$36,751,000

- **Mauritania:** The rainy season is underway in the agricultural areas, allowing the start of cultivation. Agricultural households are having difficulty securing seeds, especially local purchases, implying that farmers will not be able to take advantage of the recent rains. These risks to food security imply that close monitoring of the situation is necessary. The World Food Program reports that approximately 750,000 people have been affected by last year's locust invasion. USAID activities in Mauritania predominantly focus on combating food insecurity. To this end, USAID provided 15,080 metric tons of development food assistance and 16,240 metric tons of emergency food assistance to Mauritania in fiscal year 2005. U.S. Government assistance also funds programs addressing human rights and community based development activities.

Total FY 2005 USAID Assistance to Mauritania - \$14,160,300

- **Niger:** The current food security crisis in Niger is the result of years of chronic poverty, an early end to last year's rains and the devastation of last year's harvest and pasturelands by swarms of locusts. On August 1, the World Food Program increased the number of people needing humanitarian assistance from 1.2 to 2.5 million. USAID's support to battle food insecurity in Niger for fiscal year 2005 is approximately \$13.5 million, of which \$7.5 million is new assistance. This funding supports humanitarian activities focused on food security, agriculture, and nutrition. USAID has also funded one airlift of 45 metric tons of special nutritional food for malnourished children and is funding the airlift of an additional 206 metric tons this Friday, August 5. USAID's development assistance supports humanitarian activities focused on long-term food security, agriculture and nutrition. Ongoing USAID seed distribution and emergency nutrition programs are operational in Maradi, Tillaberi, and Zinder regions. USAID's implementing partners (four American non-governmental organizations) are already operational and will be expanding operations to include the emergency nutritional activities USAID has pledged to support. USAID has also contributed 16,550 metric tons of emergency and

development food commodities valued at over \$10 million. Development food assistance is an important part of USAID's response. Three out of the four regions where these non-governmental organizations operate are some of the most severely affected by the current crisis. Not only have these programs modified their general programming to deal with the crisis, they are also serving an important mitigating role - if these programs weren't operating, the number of people affected would be much higher. U.S. Government assistance also funds programs that address human rights, community based development, child survival and health, and youth. A USAID assessment team is in Niger and is working with existing partners to ensure that emergency and structural needs are met. For additional information on Niger, download the latest Situation Report at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/Niger/index.htm.

Total FY 2005 USAID Assistance to Niger - \$14,142,050

- **Senegal:** USAID's development program supports Senegalese efforts to enhance economic productivity, create jobs, improve access to education and health care, and further institutionalize democracy. The program in Senegal focuses on improving economic livelihoods of small and micro-entrepreneurs, improving middle school education especially for girls, improving health care to decrease child and maternal mortality and limit the spread of HIV/AIDS, and strengthening local governance through transparent financial management and investment planning at the local level. Following the 2004 locust invasion and localized drought, 42 villages in Mekhe lost between 90 and 100 percent of certain crops, according to Christian Aid. USAID has provided \$2.5 million to support emergency activities in Senegal and Mauritania in fiscal year 2005. In addition, USAID provided 4,390 metric tons of development food assistance during 2005.

Total FY 2005 USAID Assistance to Senegal - \$31,097,050



Regional Locust Response
\$10,257,496

MAURITANIA
Humanitarian \$8,913,700
Development \$5,246,600

MALI
pop. 12,291,529
Development \$36,751,000

NIGER
pop. 11,665,937
Humanitarian \$6,076,050
Development \$8,066,000

SENEGAL
pop. 11,126,832

SENEGAL
Humanitarian \$1,158,040
Development \$29,939,010

BURKINA FASO
pop. 13,925,313
Development \$16,206,500

TOTAL USAID FUNDING TO THE SAHEL
\$122,614,396

USAID PROGRAMS IN THE SAHEL

- COMMUNICATION
- DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE
- ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
- EDUCATION
- FOOD SECURITY/AGRICULTURE
- HEALTH
- LOCUST RESPONSE
- LOGISTICS
- MISCELLANEOUS
- NUTRITION
- SELF-HELP
- TITLE II FOOD

8/9/05