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**BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

Niger – Malnutrition and Food Insecurity

Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2010

July 14, 2010

Note: The last fact sheet was dated June 10, 2010.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- From June 16 to 22, USAID/OFDA staff participated in a joint assessment with the U.K. Department for International Development and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Mission to assess malnutrition and household food insecurity in Zinder and Maradi regions, Niger. The assessment team met with Government of Niger (GoN) officials and implementing partners to discuss rising acute malnutrition rates and programming objectives for the immediate future. USAID/OFDA staff noted that emergency measures are needed to ensure food security in the household over the final three months of the hunger season. Doctors in emergency nutrition centers for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and USAID-supported Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) staff both highlighted the fact that many households currently have few to no food reserves. Interventions to treat acute malnutrition are ineffective if children return to homes with few to no food reserves.
- On June 24, the U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF) released preliminary findings from the 2010 USAID/OFDA-funded nationwide Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) Nutritional Survey—conducted by the GoN and UNICEF between May 24 and June 16. The survey results indicated a significant deterioration in the overall nutritional level of children under five years of age compared to 2009. The survey found that 16.7 percent of children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition countrywide—a 35 percent increase from the 2009 SMART survey global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate of 12.3 percent.
- On July 2, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) announced plans to increase the number of people receiving emergency food assistance in Niger. WFP currently provides food assistance to approximately 2.3 million people, but plans to augment its assistance to an additional 2 million people under a new Emergency Operation (EMOP).
- Since mid-June, USAID/OFDA has committed nearly \$13 million in additional funding for humanitarian response activities in Niger, increasing the total amount provided to Niger in FY 2010 to nearly \$20.3 million. USAID/OFDA-funded programs in Niger include cash transfer programs, cash-for-work programs, and community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) interventions. To date in FY 2010, the U.S. Government has committed more than \$99.8 million to address malnutrition and food insecurity in Niger.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE	SOURCE	
Severely Food-Insecure Population	3.3 million	GoN, U.N. agencies, and FEWS NET – May 2010
Moderately Food-Insecure Population	3.8 million	GoN, U.N. agencies, and FEWS NET – May 2010

FY 2010 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED TO DATE FOR MALNUTRITION AND FOOD INSECURITY

USAID/OFDA Assistance to Niger¹	\$20,272,627
USAID/FFP Assistance to Niger	\$79,535,000
Total USAID Humanitarian Assistance to Niger	\$99,807,627

CURRENT SITUATION

- FEWS NET predicts a normal to above-normal July to September rainy season; which, along with continued humanitarian interventions, is expected to help stabilize food-insecurity and prevent a rapid increase in the market prices of cereals. However, FEWS NET also predicts that the return of migrant laborers to places of origin for the planting season will not only increase the demand for cereals and seeds in rural areas, but also lead to decreased remittances, a key coping mechanism to date.
- WFP continues to conduct a blanket feeding program, providing corn-soya blend (CSB), oil, and sugar targeted to 500,000 children between the ages of six and 23 months. The program began in mid-May; however, during

¹ This figure includes \$500,000 for cash-for-work activities and other interventions in response to the effects of severe flooding in Agadez city in September 2009. According to USAID/OFDA implementing partner Mercy Corps, program beneficiaries are using 96 percent of cash earned to purchase food so as to bolster household food security.

registration in targeted areas, WFP staff discovered a larger population of children in the targeted age group, including an additional 22,000 children in Zinder Region alone, according to USAID/OFDA staff.

Nutrition

- According to the SMART survey results, nearly 22 percent of children between six and 35 months of age and 9.5 percent of children between 36 and 59 months of age currently suffer from acute malnutrition. The SMART survey indicated GAM rates above the 15 percent U.N. World Health Organization emergency threshold in Diffa, Maradi, Zinder, and Tahoua regions, with GAM rates of 22.1 percent, 19.7 percent, 17.8 percent, and 15.8 percent respectively. The survey recorded GAM rates between 10 and 15 percent in Agadez, Dosso, Niamey, and Tillabéri regions.
- Emergency nutrition centers registered approximately 7,200 new SAM cases per week during May and June, bringing the total registered number of acutely malnourished children to more than 121,300 as of June 27, according to UNICEF.
- During the joint assessment, USAID/OFDA staff noted the importance of supplementing the WFP blanket feeding program with family rations to prevent mothers from distributing children's rations to other family members, which renders the intervention ineffective. During discussions with USAID/OFDA staff in June, some households reported sharing the blanket ration with family members, resulting in more rapid consumption of the rations—within 3 to 4 days. The WFP EMOP plans to provide blanket feeding recipients with special supplementary feeding materials to boost nutrition intake, as well as a general ration of staple foods to prevent families from consuming the nutritional products provided specifically for children. WFP also plans to increase emergency food assistance to approximately 105,000 malnourished pregnant women and nursing mothers.
- Relief agencies Médecins Sans Frontières/Belgium (MSF), MSF/France, and MSF/Spain are partnering with WFP to provide ready-to-use supplementary foods with the blanket feeding to boost children's micronutrient intake in regions where MSF is already working, in coordination with the GoN Director of Nutrition and the U.N. Nutrition Cluster, according to USAID/OFDA staff.
- To date in FY 2010, USAID/OFDA has committed nearly \$8.3 million to implementing partners Helen Keller International (HKI), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), UNICEF, and World Vision (WV) for programs to treat, mitigate, and prevent acute malnutrition among children under five years of age. Activities include CMAM, active screening, data collection and analysis, and the procurement of ready-to-use therapeutic foods and essential medicines.

Agriculture and Food Security

- FEWS NET reports that the culmination of migrant returns in June is expected to result in decreased household income due to the cessation of migrant remittances, as well as increased strain on household food supplies due to increasing numbers of people in households.
- USAID/OFDA staff report that a 5 kg bag of millet cost approximately 1,200 West African Francs (CFA) in May. However, populations in some areas reported that the price increased to approximately 1,400 CFA in June. In late June, FEWS NET reported that decreased demand for livestock has resulted in reduced livestock prices and a further deterioration in the terms of trade for agro-pastoralists and poor households largely dependant on small livestock. During the joint assessment, officials in Maradi City, Maradi Region, reported that individuals had sold cattle for as little as 2,000 CFA, or approximately \$4.
- According to USAID/OFDA staff, farmers are responding to agriculture and food security interventions—including seed fairs—implemented by USAID/OFDA partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in four affected regions as many families have planted crops or are in the process of planting.
- To date in FY 2010, USAID/OFDA has committed more than \$4.4 million for agriculture and food security activities in Niger. CRS commenced USAID/OFDA-funded seed programs in April to provide farmers in four affected regions with sufficient agricultural inputs to increase the chances of an adequate harvest in September 2010.
- To date in FY 2010, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) has provided more than 47,000 metric tons (MT) of emergency food assistance, valued at approximately \$52.7 million, to benefit affected populations throughout Niger through implementing partners Counterpart International (CPI), WFP, CRS, CARE, HKI, Oxfam-Great Britain (Oxfam/GB), and Vétérinaires Sans Frontières/Belgium (VSF/B). In addition, USAID/FFP has provided approximately \$26.8 million in Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP) grants for the local procurement of food, as well as a food voucher program, in affected areas through implementing partners CRS, Mercy Corps, and WFP.

Livelihoods

- During the joint assessment, USAID/OFDA staff noted that cash interventions have successfully boosted food security for households in affected regions by improving the purchasing power of food-insecure populations and preventing negative coping mechanisms, including reduced food intake.
- To date in FY 2010, USAID/OFDA has committed approximately \$9.6 million for economic recovery and market systems interventions in Niger, including support for vouchers, cash transfers, and CFW activities implemented by Mercy Corps, Concern, Save the Children/UK (SC/UK), Oxfam/GB, WFP, and VSF/B.
- With USAID/OFDA support, SC/UK is implementing cash transfer activities in Tessoua and Aguié departments, Maradi Region, aiming to strengthen food security and limit potential malnutrition in affected areas. The program seeks to provide families with money to meet their monthly expenditures and reduce dependency on negative coping mechanisms, including selling assets and mortgaging land. According to the April GoN household food security survey, 29.3 percent of the total population of Maradi Region was severely food-insecure—the most food-insecure region in Niger.
- With USAID/OFDA assistance, Mercy Corps is also working to increase the purchasing power of food-insecure households in Agadez and Niamey regions. Through cash-for-work and other initiatives, Mercy Corps seeks to enable vulnerable households to utilize local markets to meet their basic needs and restore assets.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- On January 14, 2010, U.S. Ambassador Bernadette M. Allen declared a disaster due to the effects of food insecurity in Niger. In response, USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$20.2 million to date to support response activities, including interventions in nutrition, agriculture and food security, economic recovery and market systems, and local food procurement and distribution.
- To date in FY 2010, USAID/FFP has provided more than 47,000 MT of emergency food assistance, valued at approximately \$52.7 million, to benefit affected populations in Niger. In addition, USAID/FFP has provided approximately \$26.8 million in EFSP grants for the local procurement of agricultural food, as well as a cash voucher program.
- Since the failed harvests, USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP staff have conducted frequent trips to assess acute malnutrition and food insecurity conditions and meet with implementing partners, other non-governmental organizations and U.N. agencies, and GoN officials. USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP staff continue to monitor the situation in conjunction with the U.S. Embassy in Niamey and other partners to determine humanitarian needs.
- USAID/OFDA funding in FY 2010 in response to acute malnutrition and food insecurity in Niger complements other USAID/OFDA funding in recent years. In FY 2009, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$9.1 million in response to the global food price crisis in Niger, supporting implementing partners Mercy Corps, SC/UK, the Cooperative League of the USA, UNICEF, and WFP for nutrition, agriculture and food security, and economic recovery and market systems interventions benefiting more than 1.1 million people.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO NIGER FOR MALNUTRITION AND FOOD INSECURITY

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
Concern	Nutrition; Economic Recovery and Market Systems	Tahoua Region	\$863,610
CRS	Agriculture and Food Security	Dosso, Maradi, Tillabéri, and Zinder regions	\$998,367
HKI	Nutrition	Diffa, Zinder, and Dosso Regions	\$1,846,719
IFRC	Nutrition	Dosso, Niamey, and Zinder Regions	\$600,000
Mercy Corps	Economic Recovery and Market Systems; Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	Agadez Region	\$1,077,830
Mercy Corps	Economic Recovery and Market Systems	Niamey Region	\$995,552
Mercy Corps	Local Food Procurement and Distribution	Tillabéri Region	\$626,541
Oxfam/GB	Agriculture and Food Security; Economic Recovery and Market Systems	Maradi and Tillabéri Regions	\$2,268,300
SC/UK	Economic Recovery and Market Systems	Maradi Region	\$2,812,282

U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Agriculture and Food Security	Zinder and Tahoua Regions	\$500,000
U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Affected Areas	\$200,000
UNICEF	Nutrition	Affected Areas	\$4,171,819
U.N. Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)	U.N. Humanitarian Air Service	Affected Areas	\$700,000
WFP	Economic Recovery and Market Systems	Tillabéri Region	\$886,602
WV	Nutrition	Maradi and Tillabéri Regions	\$999,993
VSF/B	Agriculture and Food Security; Economic Recovery and Market Systems	Tillabéri Region	\$725,012
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$20,272,627
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
CPI	2,310 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Diffa and Zinder Regions	\$2,808,200
CRS, CARE, HKI	8,060 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Affected Areas	\$8,526,800
CRS	EFSP for Food Vouchers	Tillabéri Region	\$4,400,000
Mercy Corps	EFSP for Local Procurement and Vouchers	Tillabéri Region	\$4,800,000
WFP	EFSP for Local and Regional Procurement of Cereals	Affected Areas	\$17,600,000
WFP	36,640 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Affected Areas	\$41,400,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$79,535,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO NIGER FOR MALNUTRITION AND FOOD INSECURITY IN FY 2010			\$99,807,627

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of July 14, 2010. The total funding figure includes \$500,000 for cash-for-work activities and other interventions in response to the effects of severe flooding in Agadez city in September 2009. According to USAID/OFDA implementing partner Mercy Corps, program beneficiaries are using 96 percent of cash earned to purchase food so as to bolster household food security.

² Estimated values of food assistance and ESFP grants.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. Information on organizations responding to the humanitarian situation in Niger may be available at www.reliefweb.int.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov – Keyword: Donations
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/