



NIGER – FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Following Niger’s food insecurity and acute malnutrition crisis of 2009/2010, food security in Niger generally improved in FY 2011 due to favorable rainfall and harvest patterns and increased grain price stabilization. The 2010 harvest produced an estimated 5.5 million metric tons (MT) of grain, approximately 40 percent above the five-year average. An evaluation of food security conditions conducted by Niger’s national early warning system in May and June 2011 found that approximately 2.3 million people in Niger were food-insecure, a 63 percent decrease from the same period in 2010. In addition, the quantity of food consumed in Niger remains at normal levels, despite an increase in demand due to the return of migrants from Libya, as a result of targeted food distributions to vulnerable households, according to the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).
- Despite improved food security conditions in many areas, extreme weather events, including drought and floods, continue to negatively impact agricultural activities in many parts of Niger, as the majority of the predominantly agro-pastoral population relies on a single rainy season for crop cultivation and pasture renewal. Flooding in mid-August, for instance, affected nearly 14,000 people in Tillabéri and Maradi regions, destroying more than 100,000 hectares of crops and 1,000 houses, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
- Due to improved food security and ongoing acute malnutrition relief interventions, the national prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) among children under five years of age decreased to 12.3 percent as of July 2011, a decline from the prevalence of 16.7 percent in November 2010. However, GAM levels remained near the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) emergency threshold of 15 percent in five of Niger’s eight regions as of June 2011.
- In FY 2011, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) provided nearly \$13.7 million in humanitarian assistance to benefit affected communities in Niger through agriculture and food security, economic recovery and livelihoods, and nutrition programs.
- USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) provided nearly \$50.7 million for food assistance and economic recovery and livelihoods support. In total, USAID provided more than \$64.3 million in emergency assistance for Nigeriens affected by food insecurity, acute malnutrition, and impaired livelihoods in FY 2011.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		Source
Food-Insecure Population ¹	2,287,398	FEWS NET – July 2011

FY 2011 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING	
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Niger	\$13,660,593
USAID/FFP Assistance to Niger ²	\$50,692,000
Total USAID Humanitarian Assistance to Niger	\$64,352,593

Context

- Approximately 14 million people— nearly 90 percent of Niger’s total population —live in rural areas, according to FEWS NET. The majority comprises crop farmers and herders who are directly impacted by the amount and variability of annual rainfall. To cope with food insecurity, many individuals migrate to urban centers or neighboring countries, notably Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Libya. Those who are unable to afford relocation may resort to exploiting natural resources, such as selling wood, or seeking wage labor locally.
- In 2009/2010, residents of agro-pastoral and pastoral zones throughout Niger experienced significant increases in food insecurity and rising acute malnutrition levels as a result of large rainfall deficits and failed harvests, as well as a

¹ Residents of 17 departments of Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéri, and Zinder regions are currently most vulnerable to food insecurity, according to FEWS NET.

² The figure listed does not reflect USAID/FFP funding for development programs in Niger.

second consecutive year of poor pasture conditions for livestock due to prolonged drought. In 2010/2011, food security conditions improved due to strong harvests, although acute malnutrition rates remained high, according to a joint assessment by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and U.N. World Food Program (WFP) in early 2011.

- On November 5, 2010, U.S. Ambassador Bisa Williams re-declared a disaster due to the effects of ongoing food insecurity in Niger. USAID continues to monitor the food security situation in Niger and provide humanitarian assistance benefiting food-insecure households and populations suffering from acute malnutrition.

Agriculture and Food Security

- Favorable rainfall patterns and stabilized grain prices resulted in improved food security. Strong harvests in 2010—approximately 40 percent above the five-year average—contributed to a 63 percent decrease in the number of food insecure people from June 2010 to May and June 2011.
- Many areas of Niger reported normal start-of-season farming activities in April for the October 2011/2012 harvest. As of July 10, more than 90 percent of farming villages had planted crops, according to FEWS NET, with Dosso, Maradi, and Tahoua regions reporting a 100 percent planting completion rate. Many other areas required replanting as a result of the late start of the rainy season; however, significant rains in August improved agricultural conditions and pastures, compensating for the late start.
- Despite overall improvements, agro-pastoral and pastoral areas in Ouallam, Téra, and Tillabéri departments in Tillabéri Region have experienced delays to start-of-season farming activities. As of July 10, more than 300 farming villages had not planted crops or had lost their early-planted crops due to late rains, including more than 200 villages in Ouallam Department, nearly 100 villages in Téra Department, and more than 20 villages in Tillabéri Department. These planting delays could lead to below-average crop production. As a result, FEWS NET has placed the three departments under acute food and livelihood crisis status. In addition, Abalak Department in Tahoua Region and parts of Diffa Region have continued to experience below-average rainfall in recent months, threatening food security, according to FAO in September.
- Household food demand increased between February and July 2011, when conflict in neighboring countries triggered the return of approximately 115,000 Nigerien migrants from Libya and Côte d'Ivoire, in addition to the return of seasonal migrant workers in May, according to the International Organization for Migration. The average household size increased due to the influx, increasing the demand for grain during the June–October hunger season by approximately 10,500 MT, according to FEWS NET. However, the expectation of promising October–December grain harvests may reduce levels of acute food insecurity, according to FEWS NET.
- Market conditions in Niger have also improved since 2010 as surplus-producing farmers and traders continue to supply markets at normal levels. As a result of the record-breaking October–November 2010 harvest, coarse grain prices have remained relatively stable, an improvement over the previous year. As of August 2011, millet prices were 20 percent lower than prices in 2010, according to FAO. In addition, local grain procurement by the Government of Niger and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance have contributed to grain price stabilization, according to FEWS NET.
- In response to persistent agriculture and food insecurity needs, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$2.6 million for agriculture and food security activities in FY 2011, including distribution of improved seeds and fertilizer and provision of technical agricultural support. USAID/OFDA-funded programs also included grain storage, pest management material distribution, and training to prevent loss of crops from pests—particularly in farming communities where pests destroyed sorghum and millet crops in 2010.
- In FY 2011, USAID/FFP provided food assistance valued at more than \$15.7 million to strengthen non-governmental organization (NGO) agriculture and food security programs in Niger's most vulnerable communities.

Nutrition

- The national prevalence of acute malnutrition in Niger has declined due to improved food security and emergency relief assistance. Despite improvements, GAM levels remain near the emergency threshold in more than half of all regions in Niger, particularly in the agro-pastoral and pastoral areas of Tillabéri, Téra, and Ouallam departments in Tillabéri Region. As of June 2011, the GAM and SAM levels in Tillabéri were 14.8 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively. At the national level, Niger may experience a seasonal rise in malnutrition levels during the June–October hunger season with a peak occurring between August and October 2011. As of July 2011, the nationwide prevalence of SAM among children stood at 1.9 percent, down from 3.2 percent in November 2010 but still higher than June 2009 levels.

- In FY 2011, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$6.5 million in response to ongoing nutrition needs in Niger, benefiting more than 567,000 people in affected areas. USAID/OFDA funding included \$2 million to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and more than \$11.6 million to seven non-governmental organizations for emergency nutrition programs. USAID/OFDA-funded programs prevented, treated, and mitigated acute malnutrition among children under five years of age through community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) activities, including procurement of ready-to-use therapeutic and supplementary foods, nutrition and feeding education programs, and nutritional monitoring and surveillance.
- USAID/FFP provided approximately \$35 million for nutrition interventions in FY 2011. USAID/FFP provided more than \$24.9 million in Title II food commodities to WFP for blanket supplementary feeding (BSF) of children 6 to 59 months of age and targeted supplementary feeding for children 6 to 59 months of age and pregnant and lactating women. To prevent consumption of supplemental food by children's family members, USAID/FFP also provided \$3 million to WFP for additional cash and voucher assistance to families receiving BSF. Responding to a targeted emergency request, USAID/FFP awarded \$2 million to UNICEF for cash transfers to vulnerable households with at least one child under two years of age in 236 villages in Magaria Department, Zinder Region, during the lean season. Lastly, USAID/FFP provided \$5 million to Counterpart International (CPI) to support the continuation of a Title II emergency program to strengthen the 30 health centers and clinics in Gouré Department, Zinder Region.

Economic Recovery and Livelihoods

- The return of migrant workers from Libya and Côte d'Ivoire also resulted in a loss of remittance income, reducing purchasing power among poor agro-pastoral and pastoral households, particularly in Dosso and Tahoua regions, where migration income is critical to household livelihoods. On average, between 67 and 96 percent of surveyed households across all income levels engaged in migration for livelihoods support, according to FEWS NET as of July. In 2011, migration income in Niger has fallen by 51 to 75 percent due to returns from Libya and Côte d'Ivoire. Relief agencies report that if Nigerien migrants are unable to return to Libya for work, many households could face livelihoods deficits in the coming months.
- Despite record harvests in 2010, many food-insecure households remained vulnerable due stock depletion from the 2009 crisis, according to OCHA. However, the normal progress of the 2010 growing season created demand for labor and local employment opportunities in July-August, according to FEWS NET. Due to food insecurity and a pasture deficit from 2010, many pastoralists migrated to southern farming areas—where wage labor continues to be the main source in income—in order to support their livelihoods.
- In FY 2011, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$2 million in economic recovery and livelihoods assistance, benefiting more than 130,000 vulnerable pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Maradi, Tillabéri, and Tahoua regions. USAID/OFDA-supported activities that emphasize economic recovery and livelihood interventions—including cash-for-work and cash transfer programs and livestock fairs—enable vulnerable households to rebuild and reinforce their livelihoods.

Other Humanitarian Assistance

- To date in 2011, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) has provided more than \$18 million in assistance for food security and nutrition programs in Niger. As of September 23, international donors had provided more than \$99.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Niger in 2011, according to the U.N.'s financial tracking system. International donors continue to support economic recovery, livelihoods, health, nutrition, and agricultural and food security programs in food-insecure areas of Niger through a variety of relief agencies, including FAO, UNICEF, and WFP.

FY 2011 USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO NIGER

Implementing Partner	Activity	Location	Amount
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
Action Against Hunger/USA (AAH/USA)	Agriculture and Food Security, Economic Recovery and Market Systems (ERMS), Nutrition	Maradi Region	\$662,547
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Agriculture and Food Security	Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéri, Zinder Regions	\$1,391,643
Concern	Agriculture and Food Security, ERMS, Nutrition	Tahoua Region	\$940,001
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Affected Areas	\$400,000
Helen Keller International (HKI)	Nutrition	Diffa, Dosso, Zinder Regions	\$1,078,818
Humedica	Nutrition	Tillabéri Region	\$493,208
Mercy Corps	Agriculture and Food Security, ERMS, Natural And Technological Risks, Nutrition	Affected Areas	\$1,100,852
OCHA	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Affected Areas	\$300,000
Oxfam/Great Britain (Oxfam/GB)	ERMS, Logistics and Relief Commodities	Maradi, Tillabéri Regions	\$2,021,515
Save the Children/U.K. (SC/UK)	ERMS, Nutrition	Maradi Region	\$1,970,359
UNICEF	Nutrition	Affected Areas	\$2,000,000
WFP	Logistics and Relief Commodities	Affected Areas	\$500,000
World Vision (WV)	Nutrition	Maradi, Tillabéri Regions	\$800,000
	Program Support Costs		\$1,650
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$13,660,593
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE²			
WFP	23,060 MT of Title II Emergency Food Assistance for Nutrition through Blanket Feeding	Affected Areas	\$24,929,000
WFP	Nutrition through Protection Rations	Affected Areas	\$3,000,000
Africare, CRS, CARE, HKI, and CPI	Agriculture and Food Security, ERMS, Natural and Technological Risks, Nutrition	Agadez, Maradi, Tillabéri, and Zinder Regions	\$15,696,000
CPI	3,420 MT of Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Diffa and Zinder Regions	\$5,067,000
UNICEF	Nutrition	Zinder Region	\$2,000,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$50,692,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO NIGER IN FY 2011			\$64,352,593

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 30, 2011.

² Estimated value of food assistance.

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. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for response efforts in Niger can be found at www.interaction.org.
- 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:
The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or +1.202.821.1999.
Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.