



SAHEL – FOOD INSECURITY AND COMPLEX EMERGENCY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- On March 22, a group of Malian soldiers calling itself the National Committee for the Return of Democracy and the Restoration of the State announced on national television that the group had seized power from President Amadou Toumani Toure. The group reportedly sought control out of frustration regarding the perceived failure of the Government of Mali to end a conflict with the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and other ethnic Tuareg movements that began in January in northern Mali. While the situation in the capital city of Bamako remains precarious, the seizure of power by Malian soldiers has generated no significant humanitarian impact to date.
- The market-driven movement of regional surpluses of millet, sorghum, and corn—including transfers from Côte d’Ivoire to Mali and Mauritania and from Benin to Niger and Nigeria—has increased food availability in some areas affected by food insecurity, according to findings released in mid-March by the Regional Consultation on Food Security and Nutrition in the Sahel and West Africa.¹ However, while food is available in local markets, prices remain high and will likely remain above-average due to increased demand in the region, limiting food access among vulnerable households.
- In response to high food prices in the Sahel, USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP recently provided nearly \$17 million in cash-based and other assistance, including cash transfers, food vouchers, and temporary employment opportunities, which will help up to 480,000 food-insecure people access food and other basic goods available from local vendors.

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED IN FY 2012 ²	
USAID/OFDA Assistance to the Sahel	\$9,178,292
USAID/FFP Assistance to the Sahel	\$179,021,417
State/PRM ³ Assistance to the Sahel	\$9,500,000 ⁴
Total USAID Assistance to the Sahel	\$197,699,709

Context

- The causes of hunger and malnutrition in West Africa’s Sahel Region are deeply rooted and multifaceted. Chronic underdevelopment and multiple droughts in recent years have left the population vulnerable, even to small shocks. Below-average rainfall and crop production shortages in 2011 have resulted in reduced food and livestock fodder availability in parts of the Sahel, where many vulnerable families are still recovering from the 2009/2010 food crisis.
- Between 7 and 12 million people in the Sahel are projected to need assistance in 2012, according to relief agencies.
- Global acute malnutrition rates are consistently between 10 and 15 percent in the region, with some localized areas exceeding the U.N. World Health Organization’s emergency threshold level of 15 percent.
- On October 17, 2011, U.S. Ambassador Mark M. Boulware redeclared a disaster in Chad due to the ongoing complex emergency, which includes food insecurity among its contributing factors. On December 8, 2011, U.S. Ambassador Jo Ellen Powell declared a disaster due to the effects of food insecurity in Mauritania. On December 20, 2011, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., Lucy K. Abbott issued a disaster declaration due to the effects of food insecurity in Niger.

¹ The regional consultation group comprises the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

² Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds.

³ U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM).

⁴ This figure reflects only State/PRM funding for protection and humanitarian assistance for individuals affected by the conflict between Government of Mali armed forces and Tuareg opposition groups. This figure does not include other State/PRM-funded assistance provided to refugees, conflict-affected people, and returning migrants across West Africa.

- On January 26, 2012, U.S. Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard declared a disaster in Mali due to the effects of food insecurity. On March 12, 2012, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Peter Barlerin declared another disaster in Mali due to the complex emergency resulting from conflict-related displacement.

Agriculture and Food Security

- Following the end of the 2011/2012 harvest season in early 2012, overall regional cereal production resulted in below-average yields in the Sahel, with rain-fed crops, including rice and millet, accounting for the most significant decrease in agricultural production, according to FEWS NET. Due to production shortfalls and high food prices, areas of Mauritania and Niger will likely reach Crisis level of food insecurity—Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) 3—and additional areas in the Sahel will increase to Stressed—IPC 2— between April and June, FEWS NET reports.
- In some areas of Mali, including parts of Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, and Ségou regions, cereal production is 50 to 80 percent below the five-year average. In addition, the price of millet—a staple grain for much of the population—was between 50 and 80 percent higher in January 2012 than in January 2011, according to FEWS NET. Relief agencies estimate that the number of food-insecure people in Mali may increase from 3 million to 4.8 million due to ongoing insecurity in northern Mali, which has led to the displacement of many people to already food-insecure areas.
- Without humanitarian assistance, between 70 and 90 percent of people in Diffa and Tillabéri regions of Niger could experience the depletion of household food stocks before the next harvest in October, according to a recent study conducted by the Assessment Capacities Project and the Emergency Capacity Building Project, with input from WFP and the Government of Niger. Approximately 80 percent of affected households have insufficient seed stocks for the next planting season, and nearly one-third of the population remains in debt from the 2009 crop failure. The study also noted that instability in neighboring countries has limited remittances from labor migrants and increased competition for resources as refugees flee from conflict to food-insecure communities.
- USAID/FFP is ensuring the availability of food for vulnerable populations through the recent provision of more than \$96 million in direct food assistance to the countries most affected by food insecurity, including Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. To date in FY 2012, USAID/FFP has provided nearly \$180 million in food assistance, such as cereals and pulses, to the Sahel.
- Of the approximately \$17 million USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP have provided in cash-based assistance in the Sahel in FY 2012, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$600,000 to the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) for a cash transfer program to provide as many as 9,450 vulnerable individuals in Niger with the funds to access food and basic goods available in many local markets, including seeds and farming tools for the next cultivation season. USAID/FFP also provided \$4 million to Mercy Corps in Niger, \$5 million to WFP in Mali, \$2.8 million for ACTED in Chad, and \$4.5 million for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Chad for cash transfers, food vouchers, and distribution of locally and regionally procured (LRP) food.

Security and Population Movement

Nigeria

- Chadian returnees continue to arrive at two settlements in western Chad due to ongoing insecurity in northern Nigeria related to the Boko Haram militant group. IOM is providing support—including health screenings, food assistance, emergency relief supplies, and registration services—to more than 1,000 returnees, many of whom will require onward transport to areas of origin before the upcoming rainy season, which may limit travel due to poor road conditions. In mid-March, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 to IOM for emergency relief supplies and other humanitarian assistance, including transportation and reunification support.

Mali

- Population displacement within Mali and to neighboring countries continues to increase as a result of ongoing conflict between Government of Mali (GoM) forces and armed combatants affiliated with the MNLA and other Tuareg opposition groups. As of March 29, more than 107,000 people remained displaced within Mali and an estimated 118,500 individuals were residing in neighboring countries, according to U.N. agencies.
- To accommodate the increasing number of people fleeing from Mali to Mauritania, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began rehabilitating Mbera camp—a pre-existing site located approximately 50 km from the Mali–Mauritania border—in late February. As of March 20, UNHCR had transferred more than 39,000 refugees to Mbera camp from the arrival site in Fassala. UNHCR plans to continue registering and relocating refugees who arrive in Fassala.

- With the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR has worked to relocate people who have fled from Mali to Niger away from border areas. Since March 17, UNHCR and IOM have transferred more than 2,000 individuals from Sinegodar, Niger—a border village near a site where fighting occurred between GoM forces and MNLA combatants—to Abala, Niger, a village approximately 80 km to the south.
- In FY 2012, State/PRM has provided \$9.5 million to meet the humanitarian needs of displaced Malians in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Of the total, \$7 million supports UNHCR activities, such as the provision of emergency shelter and other relief items, as well as the relocation of refugees from border areas to more secure areas in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Niger. The remaining \$2.5 million will help the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) assist people displaced in northern Mali and to Niger through the distribution of relief commodities, including emergency shelter materials, safe drinking water, and hygiene items.

Other Humanitarian Assistance

- In response to high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition in Mali, the U.N. Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated \$6 million to WFP, FAO, and the U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Of the total, WFP will receive \$2.6 million to provide emergency food assistance to 47,000 individuals, particularly female heads of household, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups. With \$800,000, FAO plans to provide farmers with livestock feed and veterinary support, benefiting 42,000 people. In addition, FAO will distribute agricultural supplies, such as tools and seeds, to vulnerable households. The remaining \$2.6 million will help UNICEF strengthen and increase acute malnutrition interventions and support water and sanitation activities.
- On March 14, the Government of New Zealand announced plans to provide \$1 million to WFP for food security interventions in the Sahel. To date, international donors have pledged nearly \$300 million in assistance to the Sahel in 2012, including \$164 million from the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and \$41 million from the Canadian International Development Agency.

FY 2012 U.S. GOVERNMENT (USG) ASSISTANCE TO THE SAHEL¹

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO BURKINA FASO²			
UNICEF	Nutrition	Burkina Faso	\$500,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO BURKINA FASO IN FY 2012			\$500,000
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO BURKINA FASO			
WFP	Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Burkina Faso	\$5,000,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO BURKINA FASO IN FY 2012			\$5,000,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BURKINA FASO IN FY 2012			\$5,500,000

USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO CHAD			
IOM	Logistics and Relief Commodities	Chad	\$50,000
U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Chad	\$300,000
UNICEF	Nutrition	Chad	\$700,000
WFP	Humanitarian Air Service	Chad	\$500,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO CHAD IN FY 2012			\$1,550,000
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO CHAD			
ACTED	Food Vouchers	Chad	\$2,767,228
Africare	Title II Agriculture and Food Security; Nutrition	Chad	\$4,890,000

CRS	Food Vouchers	Chad	\$4,504,047
WFP	Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Chad	\$78,000,000
WFP	LRP Emergency Food Assistance	Chad	\$10,000,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO CHAD IN FY 2012			\$100,161,275
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CHAD IN FY 2012			\$101,711,275

USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO MALI			
Mali Red Cross	Logistics and Relief Commodities	Mali	\$50,000
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security; Nutrition; Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Mali	\$400,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO MALI IN FY 2012			\$450,000
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO MALI			
CRS	Food Vouchers	Mali	\$2,226,023
CRS	Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Mali	\$3,331,629
WFP	Cash Transfers; LRP Emergency Food Assistance	Mali	\$5,001,190
WFP	Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Mali	\$10,000,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO MALI IN FY 2012			\$20,558,842
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MALI IN FY 2012			\$21,008,842

USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Mauritania	\$400,000
UNICEF	Nutrition	Mauritania	\$500,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA IN FY 2012			\$900,000
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA			
WFP	Cash Transfers	Mauritania	\$3,000,000
World Vision	Food Vouchers	Mauritania	\$2,000,000
WFP	Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Mauritania	\$5,000,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA IN FY 2012			\$10,000,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA IN FY 2012			\$10,900,000

USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO NIGER			
ACTED	ERMS	Niger	\$594,935
CRS	Agriculture and Food Security; ERMS	Niger	\$996,831
Mercy Corps	Agriculture and Food Security; ERMS; Natural and Technological Risks	Niger	\$1,120,715
OCHA	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Niger	\$350,000
UNICEF	Nutrition	Niger	\$1,000,000
WFP	Humanitarian Air Service	Niger	\$500,000
Vétérinaires Sans Frontières/Belgium (VSF)	Agriculture and Food Security; ERMS	Niger	\$716,811
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO NIGER IN FY 2012			\$5,279,292

USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO NIGER			
Counterpart International (CPI)	Title II Agriculture and Food Security; Nutrition	Niger	\$3,801,300
Mercy Corps	Cash Transfers	Niger	\$4,000,000
UNICEF	Cash Transfers; Local Procurement of Nutritional Products	Niger	\$3,000,000
WFP	Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Niger	\$22,500,000
WFP	Cash Transfers; LRP Emergency Food Assistance	Niger	\$10,000,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE TO NIGER IN FY 2012			\$43,301,300
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO NIGER IN FY 2012			\$48,580,592

WEST AFRICA REGIONAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE²			
WFP	Market Analysis and Vulnerability Studies	West Africa	\$199,000
WFP	Nutrition	West Africa	\$300,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO WEST AFRICA REGIONAL IN FY 2012			\$499,000

WEST AFRICA REGIONAL STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE			
UNHCR	Refugee Assistance	Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso	\$7,000,000
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Emergency Relief Supplies	Mali, Niger	\$2,500,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE TO WEST AFRICA REGIONAL IN FY 2012			\$9,500,000

TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE SAHEL IN 2012	
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING	\$9,178,292
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² USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of March 30, 2012.

³ 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 the Sahel 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.

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