



BURKINA FASO, MALI, MAURITANIA AND NIGER: FOOD INSECURITY

Fact Sheet No. 4 – Updated on 3 March 2006

For the Appeal Extension, lasting until 23 July 2006, the Federation Sahel operation will be pursuing the following objectives:

- Community-based and structural support for the health sector;
- Diversified longer term assistance through water and sanitation (WatSan) as well as relief/livelihood activities;
- The reinforcement of national society capacities through focused technical skills training, logistics and telecommunications support;
- Maintenance of a monitoring and rapid reaction presence devoted to food security and health-nutrition should acute crisis conditions emerge in the months ahead.

Niger

1. General food distributions and food security monitoring

General food distributions were completed in mid-October 2005, assisting 143,558 beneficiaries (26,023 households) at Filingue-Abala and Agadez. Through two rounds of distributions, 3,327MT of foodstuffs including cereals, pulses and oil were made available.

Monitoring of food security conditions is continuing at Filingue-Abala and Agadez in order to assess ongoing needs for assistance. Research conducted has also formed the basis for various food-for-work activities being launched in Niger.

2. Supplementary feeding and integration of health services

To date, 48,525 moderately malnourished children have been treated through Red Cross/Red Crescent supplementary feeding centres at Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder, Agadez-Arlit and Tanout. With their families also receiving protection rations, the total number of beneficiaries now stands at 291,150. Activities conducted through the supplementary feeding centres were implemented by the Federation and the French Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and the Qatari Red Crescent.

While most supplementary feeding centres have been closed or integrated into community/regional structures with the passing of acute crisis conditions, at Tahoua and Maradi some supplementary feeding persists but it is under the stewardship of government authorities, reinforced by the Federation and the Spanish Red Cross through training, education and limited commodity provision.

As part of the technical support/transition process on behalf of the Federation and the Red Cross Society of Niger for community-regional health centres, 60 health officers and 30 general staff have been trained. Integration of services has been undertaken at 15 health centres.

3. Mobile health teams

In order to assist regional authorities in providing basic health care to remote communities, the Federation- in cooperation with the Red Cross Society of Niger- has been conducting a mobile health team (MHT) project since November 2005. Presently, three mobile health teams are working with 11 regional community-regional health centres (CSI) and servicing 48 villages around Tahoua, at a distance of as much as 200km, to reinforce the positive health status of households in the area.

Through the mobile health team project, 4,212 children under 11 months have been vaccinated, 1,093 pre-natal consultations and vaccinations of pregnant women were done, 1,185 new cases of moderate malnutrition for children under 5 years were identified and treated and 7,321 de-worming treatment for children under 12 months of age was also provided.

4. Cash distribution project

As of 18 November 2005, cash distributions were completed at Tanout assisting 34,278 beneficiaries (5,713 households) at 88 villages and three pastoralist settlements. One-time cash grants of CFA120,000 (approximately USD 240 or EUR 182), were provided to each household. As part of the cash project and through a unique partnership between the Federation, the British Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross and University of Arizona, a monitoring regime began in the aftermath of the distributions to assess their impact at household, village, market and regional levels. Quantitative and qualitative information gathering is also focusing on the impact of cash distributions on the nutritional status of recipient and non-recipient households. A report of baseline findings was made available in January 2006 while the second report will be available in during March 2006.

5. Water and sanitation

In September 2005, a study was undertaken by the Federation to determine interventions in the sector of Water and Sanitation (WatSan). With a WatSan coordinator now in place, the Federation is poised to undertake well and latrine rehabilitation and construction as well as community education and training Tahoua and Filingue-Abala. Work will be done in close collaboration with the Red Cross Society of Niger and the Qatari Red Crescent.

6. Food-for-work

As a result of monitoring efforts, four food-for-work projects have been prioritized by the Federation for implementation at Filingue-Abala. The four projects are as follows:

- Soil recuperation and improvement of water catchments in Fadama;
- Rehabilitation of a community well in Fadama;
- Soil recuperation and improvement of water catchments in Tillimoune;
- Rehabilitation of a community well in Tillimoune.

At Agadez, the Irish Red Cross is also involved in a fire-bricks construction (food-for-work) project, branch development and a small grants programme.

7. Logistics and IT/Telecommunications

Since launching the Sahel operation, the Federation has benefited from transport/logistics support of the transport support unit (TSU) of the Norwegian Red Cross. Transport services are continuing along with increased technical training by the Federation for national society staff and volunteers in logistics. An improved platform for emergency response is also intended for implementation. Complementing logistics efforts will be the supply of infrastructure and training for IT/telecommunications. Logistics and IT/telecommunications objectives reflect operational priorities in Niger as well as Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania.

Burkina Faso

During the previous months, emergency food distributions reached 23,993 households (a registered number of 149,819 beneficiaries) at 312 villages in the six northern provinces of the country: Yatenga, Yagha, Lorum, Oudalan, Soum and Seno. In December 2005, a field visit undertaken by a team made up of the Federation, the Burkinabe Red Cross Society and the Luxembourg Red Cross in Yatenga, Lorum and Soum. The team found that the regions were still affected by drought as well as caterpillars and attacks by seed-eating birds. In some areas, it was predicted that food stocks would last only for two months and some producers were already eating the new crop while harvesting. As a result, a supplementary round of distributions is taking place at Soum, Oudalan and Yatenga targeting 19 sites and 8,984 households with approximately 998MT of foodstuffs. The table on the following page shows the forecasting of the current distributions.

Table 1: Forecast of current distributions of foodstuffs

| Province | Number of sites | Targeted households | Distribution time (days) | Foodstuff total (MT) |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Oudalan | 6 | 3,214 | 28 | 357 |
| Soum | 8 | 1,712 | 15 | 190 |
| Yatenga | 5 | 4,058 | 22 | 451 |
| Total | 19 | 8,984 | 65 | 998 |

Mali

The distribution of commodities provided by WFP, conducted by the Mali Red Cross, assisted 41,413 children between 5 and 59 months with the provision of 1,491MT of food in total. Additional Mali Red Cross distributions, supported directly by the Federation, made 329MT of supplementary food available to 10,226 children between the ages of 5 and 59 months. Four distribution rounds were planned over 120 days and, to date, three have been completed. The distributions took place at 104 sites in 14 communes of Tombouctou, Goundam and Gourma-Rharous regions targeting 10,226 children- 4,036 of them being girls. Rations comprised of 250g enriched flour (CSB), 30g oil and 20g sugar per child per day. To meet their objective, the Mali Red Cross and the Federation trained 20 volunteers organized in five distribution groups. The table below shows results of the three distributions implemented and the plan for the fourth.

Table 2: Breakdown of distributed food items

| Location | No. of beneficiaries | 1st Distribution (in MT) | | | 2nd Distribution (in MT) | | | 3rd Distribution (in MT) ¹ | 4th Distribution (in MT) |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | CSB | Oil | Sugar | CSB | Oil | Sugar | CSB | CSB |
| Timbuktu | 6,384 | 31.920 | 3.830 | 2.554 | 38.304 | 4.596 | 3.064 | 79.800 | 41.496 |
| Goundam | 2,329 | 11.645 | 1.397 | 0.932 | 13.974 | 1.677 | 1.118 | 29.113 | 15.139 |
| Gourma | 1,513 | 7.565 | 0.908 | 0.605 | 9.078 | 1.089 | 0.726 | 18.913 | 9.835 |
| Total | 10,226 | 51.130 | 6.135 | 4.091 | 61.356 | 7.362 | 4.908 | 127.826 | 66.470 |

Mauritania

To date, no general food distributions have been undertaken in Mauritania. As an ad hoc measure, the Federation did provide financial support to assist Mauritanian Red Crescent in its response to an unforeseen cholera outbreak. Activities of sensitization on diarrhoeal diseases in schools at Nouakchott and Rosso started in December 2005 as a continuation of effort put by the national society and the French Red Cross will continue until March 2006.

Demands for food assistance in Mauritania have not disappeared. Meetings held in December 2005 at Nouakchott by the 'Groupe Spécialisé Chargé des Zones et Groupes à Risque Alimentaire' and the 'Comité Technique de Coordination (CTC) de la Sécurité Alimentaire' recommended support for food assistance/security in 2006. Among 16 communes, needs are rated as being severe; reflecting a population of 67,262 people. In another 77 communes, food insecurity has been classified as heightened and affecting a total of 397,286 people. As a result, extremely difficult conditions could be considered as persisting and the Federation is again seeking support so that a focused response can be launched in Mauritania.

For more details and news stories, photos and operational updates related to the Sahel food crisis visit:
<http://www.ifrc.org/news/sahel/>

¹ Due to a lack of goods pipeline problems, WFP eventually stopped the distribution of oil and sugar.