

Transforming vulnerability into resilience: \$1.06bn needed to rebuild agriculture, combat hunger in 26 countries

The latest [UN report on global hunger](#) found that after years of steady declines, the ranks of the malnourished are once again on the rise, due to conflict and climate-related shocks, and now totals a troubling 815 million people. FAO is asking \$1.06bn to address acute hunger in 26 countries and, with this donor support, hopes to reach 30+ million people who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods via a range of interventions that seek to restore local food production and enhance nutrition.



Francis Hannaway via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Interventions include, for example, providing seeds, tools and other materials for crop farming, safeguarding livestock through lifesaving veterinary care, organising training in improved production, processing, and land and water management, and giving at-need families cash so they can immediately access food.

Escalating humanitarian needs are largely the result of the persistence, intensification and spread of violence and conflict – the impacts of which are often being amplified and aggravated by climate-related shocks.

"The reality is that while the lives of millions of people were saved thanks to rapid humanitarian response in 2017, millions more remain on the very edge of starvation. Maintaining food production and rebuilding agriculture is fundamental to preventing loss of life from severe hunger and to provide a pathway towards resilience in the midst of humanitarian crises," said Dominique Burgeon, director of FAO's Emergency and Rehabilitation Division and leader of FAO's Strategic Programme on Resilience.

"This is why FAO focuses on transforming vulnerability into resilience - so that when something bad happens families are better able to cope and feed themselves, people don't have to sell off their assets or flee, and communities can rebuild more quickly after the crisis passes," he added.

Key needs

FAO's 2018 humanitarian appeal focuses on assisting crisis-hit, vulnerable people in 26 of the world's most food-insecure countries.

These include Yemen, the country with the largest overall number of people in acute food insecurity, where the organisation

aims to reach 5.7 million people. In the Democratic of the Congo, FAO plans to assist almost 2.8 million people. In South Sudan, 3.9 million people will benefit from emergency livelihoods support. In Syria, where three-quarters of rural families continue to produce their own food, FAO will provide 2.3 million people with the means to do so. And in Somalia, the organisation will assist 2.7 million people facing severe hunger.

A firewall against famine

Continued conflict in Iraq, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen and other places, as well as new outbreaks of violence in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar, have played a major role in driving hunger up. In the Caribbean, hurricanes Irma and Maria left lives – and livelihoods – in tatters, while in the Horn of Africa ongoing drought has taken a heavy toll. Across all of Africa, the Fall armyworm pest is threatening the crops of millions of farmers.

Last year, discouraging trends like these saw famine - widespread death resulting from severe hunger – break out in parts of one country, South Sudan, and emerge as a real risk in three others: Yemen, Syria, and northern Nigeria.

Famine was contained in South Sudan and averted in the other three at-risk countries thanks to a massive response by the humanitarian community on multiple fronts – including large-scale support to agricultural and pastoral communities that played a key role in tilting the balance away from the worst-case scenario.

Highlights of FAO interventions undertaken as part of this joint effort:

- Provision of seeds, equipment, fertiliser, and training that enabled some six million people in Nigeria, Somali, South Sudan and Yemen to plant and harvest crops.
- 43 million animals in the same four countries – mainly cattle, goats, and camel – received veterinary care, feed and water thanks to FAO, allowing millions of pastoralist and livestock-dependent families to feed themselves and remain self-sufficient.
- Some two million poor, high-vulnerable families benefitted from FAO cash transfers (adding up to \$42m in total). These payments helped people avoid selling off household seeds, animals or other assets to buy food and bought them time and breathing room to resume their own agricultural production.