



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



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To assist
43 million people



FAO requires
USD 1.8 billion

FAO in the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plans

By the end of 2022, the *Global Report on Food Crises* recorded the highest-ever levels of acute food insecurity – affecting a quarter of a billion people in 53 countries – in spite of the highest ever levels of funding for humanitarian response.

Throughout 2023, needs remained unacceptably and stubbornly high: 258 million people in 53 countries were acutely food insecure. Concurrently, humanitarian budgets began tightening, leaving millions without assistance.

Food crises continue to dominate the global outlook for 2024.

Extreme weather events driven by the climate crisis are interacting with new and intensifying conflicts and economic instability, pushing humanitarian needs higher.

The reality of high needs and likely further contraction of bilateral donor funding means that the 2024 humanitarian response planning process must further sharpen its focus on those most at risk and the most cost-effective ways to meet their immediate food security needs.

More than ever, we must reach more people in the most effective and dignified ways possible.

The Right to Food is a basic human right.

In humanitarian contexts, food can be provided in several different ways: through direct food distributions, cash transfers that enable people to purchase food, **and emergency agriculture interventions that help people to produce their own food** and protect their livelihoods against a further deterioration.

By the end of November 2023, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had assisted more than 30 million people in food crises, despite funding cuts.



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Each context, each community is different. At the core of decision-making about which approach is applied when and where must be the priorities of affected people themselves, cost-effectiveness and largest impact on the greatest number of people.

In 2024, within the Humanitarian Response Plans, FAO is seeking a total of USD 1.8 billion to assist 43 million people to produce their own food. At a time of funding cuts, this support is both life-saving and cost-effective – on average for every USD 50 a donor provides, rural families are producing USD 300 in food.

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FAO's emergency and resilience work saves and transforms lives. In 2022, at a cost of just USD 598 million, FAO's emergency crop and vegetable production support alone meant that 23 million people were able to grow their own food and meet their family's cereal needs for an average of 11 months. Overall, the crops and vegetables they produced had a value of USD 2.75 billion. Critically, this support met significant humanitarian needs while maximizing every single US dollar of funding.

Donor decisions to fund emergency agricultural interventions at scale are having a measurable impact on needs. In Afghanistan, wheat packages provided by FAO not only can meet a family's annual wheat needs, but the seeds provided yield substantially above the alternatives, with net increases of over 0.5 tonnes per household, enough to potentially carry a typical rural household across the threshold from food insecurity

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to food security over the following 12 months. **With this level of agricultural assistance, combined with food assistance and cash transfers, the number of rural Afghans suffering from high levels of acute food insecurity has started to fall**, decreasing from 47 percent of the measured population in March to May 2022 to 40 percent in April 2023. That represents over 2.4 million people who were in improved situations despite the extraordinarily complex context.

The contrary is also true. **On average, two-thirds of those experiencing acute food insecurity rely on agriculture for their survival. Yet just 4 percent of humanitarian funding goes to emergency agriculture.** When emergency agricultural interventions are sidelined in favour of other forms of assistance, chances to massively increase food availability are lost.

Aligned with the goal of upholding human dignity through people-centred assistance, time-sensitive agricultural interventions help people produce their own food, protect their livelihoods and increase the availability of nutritious food within communities facing high levels of acute hunger. Despite active fighting at a critical moment in the agricultural season in the Sudan, with the tireless effort of local partners and the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in securing access to rural communities, **FAO was able to rapidly distribute quality crop seeds to almost 1 million farming households in time for planting.** Harvests from these seeds could be sufficient to feed about 13 million people for over 7 months.

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FAO has decades of on-the-ground operational experience in delivering timely emergency assistance – even in the most extreme situations, for the most remote communities. Donor support in 2024 will ensure that we continue to do so.

Flexible, unearmarked funding provided through the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities is the most effective way of supporting FAO’s work, enabling us to quickly act when situations deteriorate or new crises emerge.

In 2024, once again far too many people risk acute hunger and far too few resources are available to help them. Rural food producers are unable to feed their own families. With the right support at the right time, they can feed themselves, their families and their communities even in the midst of disaster. We cannot turn our backs.

Driven by our mandate and grounded in our technical, professional expertise, FAO is committed to saving lives, easing suffering and safeguarding the dignity of all facing crisis.

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