



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



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to assist  
**50 million people**



FAO requires  
**USD 1.5 billion**

## FAO in the 2022 humanitarian appeals

2021 was a grim year.

The world has not faced a risk of widespread famine affecting multiple countries so severe in over a decade. In four countries, 584 000 people are living in famine conditions. Elsewhere, an additional 45 million are at a tipping point.

Intensifying and spreading conflicts, climate extremes and the continued effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic have pushed more and more people to the brink. By early September, 161 million people were experiencing high acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Phases 3 and above) – a sharp rise compared with the beginning of the year.

And rural people are right on the frontlines – at least two-thirds of those experiencing acute hunger are in rural areas.

Despite this, the agriculture component of the 2021 humanitarian appeals was massively underfunded. Major seasons have passed and with those, a vital opportunity to secure a steady livelihood. Livestock – a critical source of nourishment and income for some of the most vulnerable people – have been left to perish. Instead, growing numbers of people are forced to rely on food assistance for seemingly endless periods.

Alongside soaring hunger, humanitarian budgets have skewed steeply upward, and resource partners' generosity has been immense. But the situation is simply not sustainable. Humanitarians are struggling to keep up – although funding to the food sector grew from USD 6.2 billion to nearly USD 8 billion between 2016 and 2019, we are still falling far short of needs.

It is time to take agriculture seriously. Agriculture is among the most cost-effective humanitarian frontline interventions. **Emergency livelihoods assistance responds to immediate hunger needs** – ensuring nutritious food is produced right where it is needed most – **and provides a path out** of protracted and deepening food crises.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has assisted 1.4 million Afghans in 2021 across 30 provinces, and the ongoing winter wheat campaign is reaching a further 1.3 million people.



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### The importance of agriculture cannot be overstated.

Keeping livestock alive and protected against diseases costs little but provides enormous benefits. For a family on the edge, just one cup of milk a day can make the difference between life and death. In Yemen, for example, with just USD 8, FAO can vaccinate and deworm an average herd of five sheep or goats, protecting assets worth USD 500 on the local market. Deworming has a near immediate impact on improving milk production, often by at least 20 percent, and when provided alongside livestock feed, can have enormous impacts on household nutrition, especially among children.

Providing seeds in time for farmers to plant before a season starts is lifesaving. In Afghanistan, where four out of five people experiencing high acute hunger are in rural areas, costing just USD 157, a wheat cultivation assistance package can supply a family of seven with enough staple food for a full year. This is less than one-quarter of the cost of purchasing the same amount of grain on the local market (which a farmer without income cannot afford). The alternative is around USD 1 080 to cover the minimum food basket needs of a family for those 12 months.

Food assistance provided after the worst-case scenario materializes is critical. But **if we don't start giving equal priority to investments aimed at rebooting local agricultural production** to save lives and making agriculture in vulnerable countries more resilient, **2022 will look just like 2021 – or worse.**

In 2021, seeds provided by FAO in time for the main planting season have ensured that over 3.5 million people in South Sudan have a steady supply of food.

## Contact

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