



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Ethiopia-Tigray

Belgium's contribution through the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA)

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Belgium support the timely delivery of agricultural inputs in the Tigray region

Northern Ethiopia's Tigray region continues to face a precarious humanitarian situation. Ongoing conflict, recurring environmental shocks and the residual impacts of a desert locust upsurge and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to widespread disruption of markets and agricultural activities, loss of livestock and inconsistent access to humanitarian assistance, negatively impacting the food security and livelihoods of people living in affected areas. As a result, the region is currently classified to be in an Emergency (IPC Phase 4) level of acute food insecurity, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).

Agriculture remains the main source of livelihood for nearly 80 percent of Tigray's population, especially farmers living in rural areas, whose production feeds the nation. Rural families in Tigray, including about 1.8 million internally displaced people, nearly 60 percent of whom reside with host communities, have relied on rainfed production and irrigated vegetables for their survival in the face of access constraints to humanitarian assistance and commercial supplies. In 2021, Tigray's farmers produced 900 000 tonnes of staple food – only 40 percent of their normal production – equivalent to 7-8 months of annual cereal needs for the region, despite challenges. Farmers were able to access 27 000 tonnes of staple crop seeds, of which 7 600 tonnes was improved seeds, and 54 000 tonnes of fertilizers thanks to the Government of Ethiopia and Agriculture Cluster partners, making production possible. But without access to both improved seeds and fertilizers at similar amounts to 2021, farmers will likely see a considerable drop in production this year, placing them at risk of losing any gains achieved and further exacerbating acute food insecurity.

In 2022, FAO and Agriculture Cluster partners have placed a particular focus on procuring and distributing fertilizer and seeds for the *Meher* season, which is the most important agricultural season for most farmers in Tigray. With a favourable rainfall outlook (normal to above-normal), the 2022 *Meher* season and subsequent irrigation and *Belg* seasons offer a critical and cost-effective opportunity to improve food availability across the region. However, limited access to seeds, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs is a major threat to agricultural production. If farmers receive the inputs they need, they will be able to harvest and begin consuming their own produce from October 2022.



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Providing farmers in Tigray with an adequate supply of essential seeds, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs will ensure continued local food production and food availability, thereby improving the food security and resilience of crisis-affected populations in the region.



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Thanks to its resource partners, FAO has procured more than 19 300 tonnes of basal fertilizer (NPS) and Urea fertilizer (approximately 40 percent of the total requirement), which is enough to meet the needs of about 300 000 households. Of this total, approximately 11 000 tonnes have reached farmers in Tigray to date for use during the *Meher* season. Though increased humanitarian access constraints since late August have disrupted the movement of additional fertilizer into Tigray, FAO is working closely with its partners to ensure the remaining quantity of fertilizer can be delivered as soon as possible, as well as exploring other contingency plans that can be pursued as required.

Through SFERA, the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium contributed USD 510 000 to FAO to help ensure the timely provision of fertilizers to meet the input needs of farmers. Belgium’s generous support will help cover transportation-related costs for delivering approximately 1 896 tonnes of Urea fertilizers to assist 37 926 crisis-affected households (189 639 people). This is in turn expected to have a positive effect on the food security and resilience of crisis-affected populations by increasing local food production and food availability. Complementing these efforts, FAO also continues to support a variety of other interventions in Tigray, Afar and Amhara, including the distribution of seeds, provision of supplemental feed for livestock, and support for animal health services and livestock vaccination.

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