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YEAR IN REVIEW 2021

WEST AFRICA

Highlights of FAO's emergency and resilience programming

In 2021, West Africa continued to face protracted insecurity and political instability, with conflicts in Central Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria). The impacts of such challenges were compounded by the socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Extreme poverty in the subregion increased by almost 3 percent in 2021 (COVID-19 West Africa Socio-Economic Impact Monitoring Report, released by the Economic Community of West African States). Consequently, the combined effects of these factors have led to a deterioration of food insecurity and malnutrition in the subregion, especially in conflict-affected areas.

The Digital Villages Initiative (DVI) in Senegal

In 2021, FAO implemented the [1 000 Digital Villages Initiative \(DVI\)](#) in Senegal. The project puts digitalisation at the core of rural transformation and prosperity, addressing farm and off-farm socioeconomic elements. The initiative has helped groups of agropastoral and fishery producers in the Niayes region to use specific applications that contribute to the improvement of productivity and the commercialization of outputs, as well as provide e-advice on the weather and crop calendar.

Through the DVI, some 300 000 small-scale farmers were registered in FAO's Digital Services Portfolio in over 3 000 of the covered villages, and around 10 000 people installed the agriculture application called "Services agricoles et inclusion digitale en Afrique (SAIDA)" on their mobile phones. The DVI also helped launch the [senlouma.org](#) e-commerce platform for Senegalese producers, giving them an outlet to create their own stores and market their production directly to end customers.

Furthermore, the Senegal DVI's *E-Tolbi* enabled 20 farmers to benefit from satellite imagery to get

production-related information from their farms remotely, helping them pursue other income-generating activities; and let the National Agency for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services remotely monitor farms via satellite imagery, resulting in extension agents covering a greater number of farms.

One million cisterns for the Sahel

The [One million cisterns for the Sahel](#) initiative aims to promote and facilitate the establishment of rainwater harvesting and storage systems for vulnerable communities in Burkina Faso, Chad, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo. The goal is to provide easy access to safe drinking water and a surplus to increase their agricultural production; improve their food security and nutrition; as well as strengthen their resilience.

Through the initiative, in 2021, some 103 cisterns were built, while another 152 were under construction. Local masons, local actors and rural households were trained on construction, maintenance and use of the cisterns and water rationalization for agriculture. In Senegal, cash-for-work activities were implemented to construct water tanks. In the Niger and Senegal, FAO distributed drought-resistant inputs to beneficiaries and provided training on agro-ecological techniques with kitchen gardens.

Promoting peaceful transhumance in the Liptako-Gourma region

With resources from the Peacebuilding Fund, FAO and the International Organization for Migration are implementing a joint project to support actors in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger to prevent and manage conflicts related to transhumance.

In 2021, the project contributed to a significant institutional and community behavioural change that strengthened conflict prevention and management mechanisms related to transhumance. The establishment

of these mechanisms, in turn, generated impacts that promoted sustainability. One such impact was that local stakeholders undertook efforts to improve land governance, reducing the risk of conflict, as well as strengthened the social inclusion of women and youth. In addition, the interventions promoted the smooth management of transhumance flows, through the dissemination of information and conflict alerts. The project also supported intra- and inter- community social cohesion by strengthening the capacities of local, national and cross-border structures responsible for preventing and managing conflicts related to livestock mobility.

Finalization of three Inter-agency Anticipatory Action Plans for Drought (Burkina Faso, Chad and the Niger) and integration of anticipatory action in the institutional framework of the Niger's Food Crisis Management

In 2021, under the pilot of the new Central Emergency Response Fund Anticipatory Action window (CERF AA) in Burkina Faso, Chad and the Niger, FAO provided direct technical assistance to the national working groups for the finalization of inter-agency Anticipatory Action Plans for drought. FAO also ensured the strong inclusion of national early warning systems as well as meteorological institutes. The development of technical tools and analysis related to these plans has strengthened the capacity of national partners, authorities and humanitarian organizations on anticipatory action. In the Niger, thanks in part to the advocacy of FAO, the importance of anticipating food crises has also been integrated into the new strategy of the National Directorate for Food Crisis Prevention and Management. Moreover, if the risk of drought materializes in one of these pilot countries, thanks to the existence of the action plans and through the monitoring of a pre-defined set of indicators, the CERF AA will mobilize funding to participating agencies, which will strongly safeguard the livelihoods and food security of households at risk.

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