



IN NUMBERS



21.8 million

people facing acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC], July 2020)



11 395

confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)



75%

of families rely on subsistence agriculture for their food and income



6.6 million

internally displaced persons (IDPs)



USD 55 million

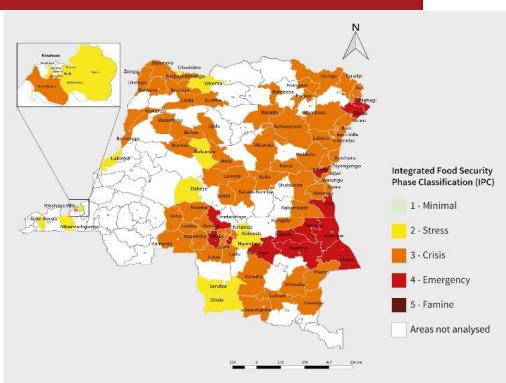
needed for 2020 under the Humanitarian Response Plan and **USD 22.8 million** under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19

KEY POINTS

- The number of people facing acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels has dramatically increased – from 15.6 million in 2019 to 21.8 million. Currently, 33 percent of the population analysed is in IPC Phase 3 and above, of whom 5.7 million people are in IPC Phase 4, and are mostly located in the provinces of North and South Kivu, Ituri and Kasai Central. The main drivers of food insecurity are (i) conflict that continues to disrupt livelihoods, (ii) the effects of COVID-19 and related containment measures, (iii) the economic decline linked to currency depreciation and drop in GDP growth, and (iv) natural hazards (floods, animal diseases, etc.).
- As the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the World Health Organization had just officially declared the end of the largest Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak, in March 2020 the country declared a state of emergency and several urgent and essential measures were put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly in Kinshasa – the epicentre of the pandemic in the country. The number of confirmed cases continues to increase with 20 out of 26 provinces affected by COVID-19.
- In the meantime, a new EVD outbreak was declared at the beginning of June 2020 in the Equateur province. However, thanks to the vaccination campaign carried out, the disease was contained and no new cases were reported since September 2020.
- Thanks to funding received in the framework of FAO's response plan to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on food security, FAO is supporting smallholder farmers in and around Kinshasa to increase urban and peri-urban agricultural production to reduce soaring food prices and maintain food availability. In addition, Germany has contributed USD 54 million for the implementation of a joint FAO/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)/World Food Programme (WFP) integrated resilience building programme to assist 280 000 people in the Kivu provinces to support food production, conservation and processing, and to enhance social cohesion, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene. Funds from Norway have also been received to support joint FAO/WFP resilience building efforts in Tanganyika along with funding from Sweden.
- A joint visit to the Kasais led by the Swedish Ambassador took place with the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and the Representatives of FAO and UNICEF, and the Deputy Representative of WFP to foster collaboration in the region in the framework of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

MAP

Current acute food insecurity situation (IPC, July–December 2020)



BACKGROUND

For over two and half decades, persistent insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the eastern part of the country, continues to affect vulnerable populations' livelihoods, limiting their access to fields thereby disrupting food production and further increasing vulnerabilities. A high prevalence of plant and animal diseases also hampers agricultural production. In addition, severe flooding in South Kivu, Tanganyika, Haut Lomami and Haut Katanga damaged food crops, and around 500 000 people have lost almost all of their food stocks. Compounding the situation are the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have significantly impacted food prices and households' livelihoods. These factors are exacerbating humanitarian needs and the country is now the world's largest food crisis. It is therefore crucial to provide livelihood support to vulnerable populations, including farmers, agro/pastoralists and fishers in order for them to produce their own food and income, and increase their self-sufficiency.

CHALLENGES FACING FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Movement restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impact the food systems and livelihoods of smallholders and vulnerable populations, including in terms of accessing agricultural tools, seeds, markets and credit. Farmers' organizations are also faced with rising food prices. The shortage of fertilizers, veterinary supplies and other inputs could also affect food production in an already difficult situation. In addition, livestock production is declining due to looting and recurrent animal diseases. Access to productive assets is particularly difficult for IDPs, as well as for returnees who often return to their area of origin and find themselves without the means to resume their livelihood activities. As the country is already facing acute hunger, any further disruption of food supply chains will worsen human suffering and hamper efforts to tackle and reduce food insecurity.

Innovative solutions to respond to COVID-19 in food crisis contexts will need to be supported by strong partnerships, advocacy and resource mobilization to scale up efforts and support subsistence and small-scale farmers and producers, mostly women and youth. The objective is to improve and diversify their daily diet, create alternative sources of income and supply markets with local, fresh products. Finally, good practices in fragile contexts must be properly documented in order to identify gaps and scale up appropriate programmes.

FAO RESPONSE

2020 PLANNED RESPONSE



2.5 million people targeted

Restore livelihoods in fragile rural areas through the provision of agricultural inputs; improve the conservation, processing and marketing of agricultural products; and promote the sustainable management of natural resources



Disseminate information and increase awareness on COVID-19 prevention measures (e.g. through Dimitra Clubs); locally develop hand-washing equipment engaging youth and women; analyse the impact of COVID-19 on food security, livelihoods and value chains; increase and diversify local agricultural production; strengthen vulnerable households resilience through safety nets; and ensure that sustainable supply systems for agricultural inputs are in place



Implement income-generating activities through cash for work and conditional cash transfers, especially for women and farmer organizations



Improve resilience through integrated activities to build nutrition-sensitive food systems, foster social cohesion, and enhance financial capacities to reduce rural poverty



Strengthen Cluster coordination to boost local and national food security capacities through monitoring and analysis, early warning systems and information sharing; and improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of food security information

RESPONSE TO DATE (January–October 2020)



1.82 million people assisted

Provided beneficiaries with 37 800 kg of vegetables seeds, about 223 500 tools, and 1 453.4 tonnes of crop and cereal seeds, allowing them to cultivate 65 948 ha of land and produce 27 251 tonnes of food



Transferred USD 2.6 million to beneficiaries through cash-based interventions in the framework of *caisses de résilience* activities



Provided beneficiaries with 1 000 guinea pigs and rabbits, and 240 goats for share farming



Trained about 3 000 households on seed multiplication, beekeeping, *caisses de résilience* activities (farmer field school, village savings and loan associations, Dimitra clubs), community radio stations, good agricultural and livestock practices, management of input shops and community warehouses

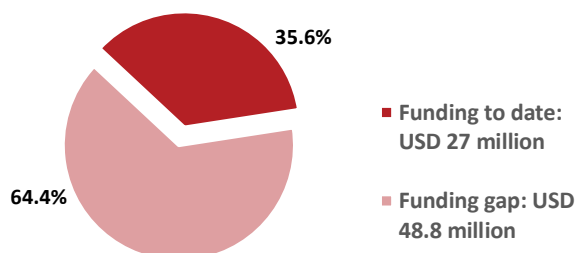


Distributed 643.6 tonnes of livestock feed to 3 218 households



Provided 1 550 households with fishing equipment and technical support

2020 FUNDING



ASSESSMENTS

The results of the 18th cycle of the IPC analysis were released in July 2020 indicating nearly a 40-percent increase in the number of people facing acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels. A study on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and market prices has been carried out in September 2020 and results should be available by the end of November.

FAO requires: USD 75.8 million **To assist:** 2.5 million people

Resource partners: the Governments of Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Sweden and of the United States of America, the World Bank, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, the European Union and the Humanitarian Pooled Fund

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