

EMERGENCY OPERATION NIGER 200398

Saving lives and preventing acute malnutrition for crisis-affected populations in Niger	
Number of beneficiaries	2,968,000
Duration of project	6 months (April -September 2012)
WFP food tonnage	159,048 mt
Cost (United States dollars)	
WFP food cost	US\$79,696,445
WFP cash cost	US\$43,666,981
Total cost to WFP	US\$235,252,398

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A severe food and nutrition crisis is currently unfolding in Niger. This is the result of a series of complex and interrelated shocks, specifically: i) significant cereal production deficits due to drought and pest infestation in Niger and the Sahel region; ii) an early and steady rise in cereal prices; iii) poor livestock-to-cereals terms of trade, linked to pasture degradation; and iv) the loss of economic opportunities and the displacement of households linked to insecurity in the Sahel region. The situation of children is of particular concern, as the high prevalence of acute malnutrition - that approaches critical levels during the lean season even during normal years - is at risk of deteriorating rapidly.

By April 2012, 3.5 million Nigeriens – 22 percent of the population – are projected to be severely food-insecure, and 2.9 million moderately food-insecure. The affected populations are in an exceptionally fragile condition and will require targeted relief assistance in order to survive the lean season. This has been confirmed by three independent assessments: i) the government-led vulnerability assessment (November-December 2011); ii) the joint Save the Children/ECHO/WFP consumption analysis (January 2012); and iii) the food security and market evaluation led by the Permanent Inter-States Committee to Fight Drought in Sahel (January 2012). Life-saving food security and nutrition support will be crucial to addressing acute needs during the April-September 2012 lean season.

WFP will adopt a comprehensive and coherent approach to respond to the needs of vulnerable households. For severely food-insecure households whose cereal stocks have been exhausted before the onset of the lean season, targeted food assistance will be in the form of cash or food



to improve consumption, the appropriate transfer modality depending on markets and food availability. A gradual scale-up of WFP's response is planned between April and June. Blanket supplementary feeding will provide fortified and blended nutritious products to children 6-23 months and lactating women to stabilize and prevent acute malnutrition. By implementing targeted food assistance and blanket supplementary feeding in parallel, household food security will be strengthened and ration sharing will be reduced, maximizing the impact of nutrition support.

While responding to the crisis during the 2012 lean season through a short, targeted emergency operation, WFP will continue to strengthen household resilience through targeted supplementary feeding, livelihood recovery activities, rehabilitation of assets, cereal banks, and school feeding under its on-going protracted relief and recovery operation and country programme.

This emergency operation supports the Government response strategy and is consistent with priorities of the Government and humanitarian community to save lives and support highly vulnerable populations during a severe seasonal crisis. The emergency operation is aligned to WFP Strategic Objective 1 ("Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies") and will contribute toward Millennium Development Goals 1 ("Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger", 4 ("Reduce child mortality") and 5 ("Improve maternal health").



SITUATION ANALYSIS AND SCENARIO

1. A severe and acute food and nutrition crisis is unfolding in Niger in 2012, within a context of high chronic food insecurity and acute malnutrition that approaches a critical level even during average lean seasons.¹ The current crisis is the result of low household resilience and severely reduced access to food on the markets, linked to cereal deficits and high food costs at the national and regional (departmental) level. The food security crisis in Niger is part of a wider crisis in the Sahel, affecting Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal.

The Overall Context

2. Niger is a landlocked, low-income, food-deficit country in the Sahara–Sahel belt, with a population of 16 million. Niger ranks 186 of 187 countries on the 2011 Human Development Index. Adult literacy of 29 percent, high gender disparities, limited access to safe water and sanitation, and rapid population growth are among the structural challenges to development. The fertility rate is among the highest in the world, at more than seven births per woman, and the maternal mortality ratio is 820/100,000 live births (the average for countries of low human development is 530/100,000).² Life expectancy at birth is 49.6 years. The situation of children is of particular concern: 21 percent never reach the age of five.
3. Periodic droughts, flooding, and pest infestations have resulted in a series of crises, such as in 2010 and 2005. In 2011, the agricultural campaign was affected by uneven, limited rainfall and a late onset of the season, which led to late sowing and slow crop development, particularly in Diffa and Tillabéri. Pest infestation also caused significant crop losses in Dosso, Maradi, Tahoua, and Zinder regions. In February 2012, the Government confirmed a gross cereal deficit of 692,500 mt, equivalent to 18 percent of the national cereal requirement, with six out of eight regions having cereal deficits.³ The 2011/2012 deficit is 69 percent higher than the 2009/2010 deficit.⁴ Poor rainfall has also resulted in a pasture deficit of more than 10 million tonnes in Agadez, Diffa, Tillabéri, Tahoua and Zinder.
4. In Nigeria, the Government cut fuel subsidies in January 2012 and fuel prices more than doubled overnight, increasing transport costs and triggering reduced cereal availability and high food prices in some areas of southern Niger. Fuel subsidies have been partially restored but prices are 30 percent higher than before. Recent insecurity in northern Nigeria has led to the closure of the eastern border at Diffa, restricting the normally heavy cross-border movement of goods. Thousands of migrants have reportedly returned to Niger, reducing remittances and increasing demand on household and community food supplies.⁵
5. The sudden influx of some 23,000 Malian refugees and Nigerien returnees into parts of Tillabéri region at the end of January 2012 has further complicated the precarious food security for the displaced and affected host communities. Displaced people have

¹ WHO, 1995. Prevalence of wasting 10-14% is considered “serious”; 15% and above is considered “critical”. *Cut-off values for public health significance*. <http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/en>

² United Nations Development Programme. 2010. *Human Development Report*. New York.

³ Ministère de l’agriculture - Direction des statistiques agricoles. Février 2012. *Evaluation de la campagne agricole 2011/2012 et résultats définitifs*. Niamey.

⁴ Ministère de l’agriculture - Direction des statistiques agricoles. Février 2010. *Evaluation de la campagne agricole 2009/2010 et résultats définitifs*. Niamey.

⁵ Based on informal reports from WFP sub-offices, field partners, and security.



generally arrived with few or no assets and essentially no means of subsistence. Rapid assessments indicate that household food stocks among receiving communities are exhausted, food availability is variable, and local cereal banks have few, if any, stocks.⁶

6. Security in the northern Agadez region has been deteriorating since early 2007. Landmine incidents, banditry and abductions are significant challenges to humanitarian operations. Threats of abduction of international staff have spread to other regions of Niger, leading to more stringent United Nations security measures.

The Food Security and Nutrition Situation

Food security

1. Food markets in Niger in 2012 are characterized by: diminished availability of local commodities due to reduced domestic production; fewer imported cereals due to high cereal prices in the Sahel region (dissuading imports); and complicated cross-border trade in recent months due to insecurity in northern Nigeria.⁷ These factors have contributed to price volatility and rising cereal prices unseasonably early in the post-harvest period.
2. Cereal prices are markedly higher than the same period during the 2005 drought crisis and the 2008 food price crisis. In December 2011, millet prices at the national level were 24 percent higher than the five-year average. Whereas markets continued to function normally in Niger during the 2010 drought crisis, in 2012 the acute food access crisis is linked to continued cereal price increases compounded by uncertain food availability across local markets and decreasing livestock prices.
3. Livestock prices have been in continuous decline since the last quarter of 2011, a trend expected to continue until the onset of the rainy season. There has been a progressive deterioration in animal health due to the pasture deficit. The convergence of high cereal prices and low livestock prices has substantially decreased the livestock-to-cereals terms of trade.⁸ Small-scale pastoralists who suffered a high loss of livestock during the 2009-2010 crisis (estimated at 63 percent)⁹ are expected to be particularly affected in 2012.
4. The negative impact of the early price increases on the access of poor and vulnerable households to basic food has been swift and is expected to worsen in the coming months, even before the usual start of the lean season. Though there has been a general stabilization in cereal prices at national level in early 2012, prices remain high and availability of food in local markets varies across regions. Historical and current food and fuel price trends suggest that cereal prices will continue to rise before and during the lean season, because demand is high and food supplies are dwindling.
5. Food-insecure households have been unable to reinforce their food security in anticipation of the 2012 lean season. Their fragile food access is severely constrained by high cereal prices, agriculture deficits linked to poor rainfall and pest infestation, and chronically low purchasing power. The loss of economic opportunities and

⁶ IOM/OCHA/UNICEF/WFP/WHO/local authorities. February 2012. *Rapport de mission d'évaluation de la situation humanitaire à Sinégodar suite à l'arrivée massive de déplacés consecutive à l'attaque rebelle contre la localité d'Aderboukane au Nord-Est du Mali*. Niamey.

⁷ CILSS/FAO/WFP/FEWS-Net. January 2012. *Evaluation des marchés et la situation alimentaire au Sahel*.

⁸ WFP/SIMA/FEWS-Net. December 2011. *Albichir report no.26 – Analyse approfondie des marchés et de la sécurité alimentaire au Niger*. Niamey.

⁹ FAO/WFP/SAP/OXFAM/INS/FEWS-NET. June 2011. *Evaluation rapide de l'impact de la crise pastorale 2009-2010 sur la décapitalisation du cheptel et sur les moyens de subsistance des populations pastorales et agropastorales du Niger*. Niamey.



displacement of households due to insecurity in neighbouring countries are additional burdens that are beyond the coping abilities of affected communities. As of December 2011, vulnerable households had only three months of cereal stocks remaining.¹⁰ Baseline assessment for WFP livelihood support activities found one in two households to be in debt.¹¹

6. The Save the Children, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission (ECHO) and WFP consumption analysis (January 2012) found that within surveyed areas of Maradi, Tahoua, and Zinder, poor and very poor families had already resorted to negative coping strategies to meet basic food and other survival needs. These include: migration in larger numbers and for longer periods (while migration of men is typical, entire households are migrating in 2012); pulling children out of school; selling productive assets; and reducing the amount and diversity of food consumption over a long period.¹²
7. Two million people¹³ are chronically food-insecure in Niger and unable to meet basic food requirements even under normal conditions. In January 2012, the Government estimated 1.9 million people to be severely food-insecure (12 percent of the total population) and 4.2 million moderately food-insecure. The situation is expected to worsen over the coming months as households exhaust their limited food stocks and use increasingly negative coping strategies. By April, 3.5 million people are expected to be severely food-insecure (22 percent of the total population) and 2.9 million moderately food-insecure.¹⁴ The findings of the government-led vulnerability assessment¹⁵ have been fully corroborated by the food security and market evaluation led by the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (*Comité permanent inter-États de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel - CILSS*), as well as the consumption analysis carried out by Save the Children, ECHO and WFP.¹⁶

Nutrition

8. A survey in June 2011 showed a “serious” prevalence of wasting (global acute malnutrition - GAM) of 12 percent at the national level while regional prevalence ranged from 7-15 percent, with seven of eight regions above the 10 percent “serious” threshold.¹⁷ The situation of children 6-23 months is particularly alarming, with wasting surpassing 20 percent compared with 8 percent among children 24-59 months.¹⁸
9. Experience shows that wasting¹⁹ can rapidly increase above the 15 percent “critical” threshold and exceed the treatment capacity, as during the 2005 and 2010 crises. In the

¹⁰ SAP/INS/WFP/EU/FAO/UNDP/UNICEF/CILSS/FEWS-Net. 2011.

¹¹ Under WFP protracted relief and recovery operation 20051; study unpublished – WFP. January 2012.

Principaux renseignements des enquêtes cash-food for work réalisées du 5-14 janvier 2012 dans les régions de Dosso, Tahoua, Maradi, et Tillabéri.

¹² Save the Children/ECHO/WFP. 2012.

¹³ WFP, *Chocs et vulnérabilités au Niger : Analyse des données secondaires, octobre 2010*. Niamey.

¹⁴ SAP/INS/WFP/EU/FAO/UNDP/UNICEF/CILSS/FEWS-Net. 2011. *Evaluation conjointe de la vulnérabilité à l'insécurité alimentaire des ménages en milieu rural et urbain*. Niamey.

¹⁵ SAP/INS/WFP/EU/FAO/UNDP/UNICEF/CILSS/FEWS-Net. 2011.

¹⁶ CILSS/FAO/WFP/FEWS-Net. January 2012. Save the Children/WFP/ECHO. January 2012. *Scenarios pour l'année de consommation Octobre 2011-Septembre 2012 pour 3 aires géographiques au Niger*. Niamey.

¹⁷ Niamey (11 percent), Zinder (11.1 percent), Tahoua (12 percent), Maradi (12.2 percent), Dosso (12.7 percent), Diffa (13.9 percent) and Tillabéri (14.8 percent).

¹⁸ INS/Ministère de la Santé/UNICEF/WFP, 2011.

¹⁹ Wasting in children is a symptom of acute undernutrition, usually as a consequence of insufficient food intake or a high incidence of infectious diseases, especially diarrhoea. Wasting impairs the functioning of the immune system and can lead to increased severity and duration of and susceptibility to infectious diseases and an increased risk of death.



2010 lean season, wasting among children 6-59 months reached 17 percent at national level; all regions had GAM above the 10 percent “serious” threshold, and half had GAM above the “critical” threshold.²⁰

10. Chronic malnutrition, at 51 percent of children nationwide, is also significantly above the 40 percent prevalence considered “very high”²¹ and exceeds 60 percent in some areas.²² Micronutrient deficiencies are also widespread: 84 percent of children under 5 and 61 percent of pregnant women are anaemic; 40 percent of children under 5 are deficient in vitamin A.²³

Scenario

11. This emergency operation (EMOP) is based on the scenario outlined in the assessments, specifically: an acute but short-term food access crisis as result of significant deterioration in food security for vulnerable households before and during the lean season. Children under 2, because of their fragile nutritional status, are at severe risk. The estimate of 3.5 million severely food-insecure persons could increase if there is deterioration during the peak of the lean season in June for households identified as moderately food-insecure. A re-assessment in May-early June will confirm the population in need of assistance.
12. Food costs are expected to continue to be high and the livestock-to-cereals terms of trade likely to continue to decline. Local market functioning and food availability are expected to vary across local markets and will require case-by-case analysis and systematic monitoring.
13. The influx of displaced persons from northern Mali is expected to stabilize, although most are unlikely be able to return to their place of origin in the immediate term.
14. The relief food requirements in the rural areas during the 2012 lean season are expected to be covered by WFP (70 percent), the Government (20 percent) and non-governmental organizations (10 percent).

²⁰ INS/Ministère de la Santé/UNICEF/WFP. November 2010. *Rapport de l'enquête nationale – nutrition, mai /juin Niger*. Niamey.

²¹ WHO, 1995. Prevalence of stunting: <20% is “low”; 20-29% is “medium”; 30-39% is “high”; >40% is “very high”. *Cut-off values for public health significance*. <http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/en>

²² Institut National de la Statistique (INS)/Ministère de la Santé/UNICEF/WFP. July 2011. *Rapport de l'enquête nationale – nutrition, mai /juin Niger*. Niamey.

²³ INS. 2006. *Enquête Démographique et de Santé à Indicateurs Multiples*. Niamey



POLICIES, CAPACITIES AND ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHERS

Policies, Capacities and Actions of the Government

15. The National Mechanism for Prevention and Management of Food Crises (*Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion des Crises Alimentaires* - DNP-GCA) is a government-led and donor/United Nations supported national mechanism. Under DNP-GCA, the national early warning system (*Système d'alerte précoce* - SAP) monitors food security and warns of impending crises. The Government has established information systems on cereal and livestock prices.
16. In October 2011, an interim support plan²⁴ was issued, focusing on food security, nutrition, agriculture and pastoralism, and the rebuilding national cereal stocks for the period October 2011–March 2012.²⁵ The support plan has been used by humanitarian organizations as a framework for interventions. Following a recent vulnerability assessment, the support plan was revised in February 2012 for a two-phase response to the crisis:
- Phase one (February-May) focuses on critical livelihood support activities, specifically cash/food for work, livestock support, some unconditional relief food, reinforcement of cereal banks, and targeted and blanket supplementary feeding.
 - Phase two (June-September) plans for targeted unconditional cash/food relief in addition to the sale of subsidized cereals, distribution of emergency seeds ahead of the 2012 planting season, and the continuation of targeted and blanket supplementary feeding.²⁶
17. The Government maintains a stock of cash and cereals through the DNP-GCA and the National Food Products Board of Niger (*Office des produits vivriers du Niger* - OPVN) manages warehouses and trucks. WFP supports the OPVN through expertise and logistics assistance. The government reserves can be used to respond to food crises through the food crisis response unit (*Cellule Crises Alimentaires* – CCA) under the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, which is responsible for the coordination and implementation of relief activities.
18. Annual vulnerability surveys under the early-warning system identify the regions and sub-regions where food-insecure people will need assistance, and the number of people. The National Institute of Statistics (*Institut National de la Statistique* - INS) will lead a joint nationwide nutrition survey in June 2012.
19. The national protocol for acute malnutrition was recently revised, introducing mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) as a tool for admission to and discharge from treatment programmes during nutrition crises. The discharge criteria using weight for height has been reinforced, extending the treatment period for moderate acute malnutrition from two to three months.

²⁴ DNP-GCA. October 2011. *Plan de soutien préliminaire*. Niamey.

²⁵ Based on the interim support plan and early warning indication of the deteriorating situation, in December 2011 WFP approved a budget revision of WFP PRRO 200051.

²⁶ DNP-GCA. February 2012. *Plan de soutien aux populations vulnérables – 2012*. Niamey.



Policies, Capacities and Actions of Other Major Actors

20. The 2012 Niger Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) highlights food security, nutrition, and health as key sectors, and includes early recovery focusing on strengthening the capacity of households to cope with shocks and the complementarity between humanitarian and development activities. The 2012 CAP initially totalled US\$229 million and is being revised to reflect recent reassessments.
21. WFP and UNICEF have a joint nutrition action plan to support government and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners' capacity in screening, treatment, prevention, and monitoring of malnutrition.
22. WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are enhancing their partnership through a joint cash-for-work project in 2012.
23. The capacity of existing international and national NGO partners in preparing, implementing and monitoring large-scale interventions has been strengthened through a combination of experience and training.

Coordination

24. The main forum for coordination of relief responses and discussion of food security interventions is DNP-GCA. The Joint Consultative Commission (*Commission mixte de concertation*) of government and donor representatives coordinates at the policy level; technical aspects are handled by the Select Consultative Committee (*Comité restreint de concertation*). Sectoral groups on nutrition, agriculture, herding and cash programming hold regular meetings. WFP is a partner in all these forums.
25. Under the cluster approach, WFP and FAO co-lead the food security cluster and WFP is an active participant in the nutrition cluster. The logistics and emergency telecommunication clusters are being activated in Niger, under the leadership of WFP.

RESPONSE STRATEGY

26. Through this short, highly targeted EMOP, WFP can best respond to the immediate food access crisis, while also maintaining important interventions addressing medium and long-term challenges to improving and sustaining food security and nutrition in Niger under its protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) and country programme.
27. The EMOP adopts a comprehensive and coherent approach for a timely response to the food security and nutrition needs of vulnerable households during the April-September lean season. Severely food-insecure households whose cereal stocks have been exhausted before the onset of the lean season will benefit from targeted assistance through food and/or cash transfers; the appropriate transfer modality (cash or food) will depend on market functioning and food availability. In parallel, blanket supplementary feeding (BSF) using specially formulated nutritious products will target lactating women and children 6-23 months. Activities will be gradually scaled-up between April and June, depending on the needs of different target groups and zones. About 35 percent of the beneficiaries under targeted food assistance are expected to receive cash transfers but if markets are functioning, food is available, prices are stable, and partner technical capacity allows, WFP will consider expanding cash transfers further.
28. PRRO 200051 (July 2011-December 2012) focuses on seasonal conditional support to improve the resilience of severely vulnerable populations prior to the lean season; this



includes community activities for rehabilitation of land, water conservation, and building disaster-mitigation assets. Based on early warning indicators of the looming crisis, conditional support was scaled-up in December 2011 through a budget revision to the PRRO.

29. During the peak of the 2012 lean season, severely food-insecure households will transition from conditional support activities under the PRRO to unconditional life-saving assistance under this EMOP. Conditional, work-based activities will not be appropriate during the lean season as they would compete with the labour requirements for the planting season. Following the lean season, if a good harvest and if acute malnutrition has stabilized, the PRRO will provide a smooth transition to livelihood recovery activities for crisis-affected vulnerable households from October 2012 onwards.²⁷
30. The EMOP includes a contingency relief component for people displaced and affected by insecurity in Mali. Before the launch of this EMOP, displaced families have benefited from assistance under the on-going PRRO; if humanitarian needs of displaced populations become protracted, WFP could revert to support under the PRRO if appropriate.
31. In light of the continuing “serious” levels of acute malnutrition in Niger, targeted supplementary feeding to treat moderate acutely malnourished children 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women is maintained under the PRRO throughout 2012.
32. The WFP country programme 101640 (2009-2013) aims to address key long-term structural challenges to food security and nutrition, focusing on education and rural development.

OBJECTIVES OF WFP ASSISTANCE

33. In line with the 2008-2013 WFP Strategic Plan, the EMOP will contribute to Strategic Objective 1 (“Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies”) specifically to:
 - Stabilize and prevent acute malnutrition in targeted crisis-affected populations, focusing on the 1,000-day window of opportunity from conception to 2 years.
 - Improve food consumption among populations whose food security and nutrition status have been affected by a complex and severe slow-onset crisis and who are unable to meet basic food needs during the lean season.
34. The EMOP is in line with the WFP response framework for the Sahel region which harmonizes country-level food security and nutrition emergency interventions.²⁸ Under the framework, WFP interventions: i) are launched in response to the government request and elaborated in consultation with partners based on the national response plan; ii) target geographic areas and households based on vulnerability and food/nutrition security assessments; and iii) are aimed at providing food security and nutrition support.

²⁷ A downward budget revision of the PRRO will ensure that there is no overlap in food/cash support activities under the EMOP and PRRO.

²⁸ Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.



BENEFICIARIES AND TARGETING

35. Targeted food assistance and blanket supplementary feeding will be implemented in parallel, and in the same geographic areas. Extremely vulnerable households with children 6-23 months which meet the criteria for targeted food assistance will thus benefit from both activities; in this way, sharing will be reduced and household food security strengthened, maximizing the impact of nutrition support.
36. Activities will be gradually scaled up between April and June, targeted to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of specific groups and zones, including: displaced Malians and Nigeriens and host communities; highly vulnerable urban populations not assisted through livelihood support activities under WFP PRRO; and vulnerable households in pasture-deficit sub-regions with high prevalence of severe food insecurity and high dependency on pastoralism, and for whom the peak of the lean season begins earlier. By June, beneficiary figures will reach a peak level.

Blanket supplementary feeding

37. Blanket supplementary feeding will support children 6-23 months and lactating women with infants under 6 months.²⁹ The intervention has been designed in consultation with the nutrition cluster and the national blanket feeding committee, and is in line with recommendations from the evaluation of WFP's previous EMOP in Niger.³⁰ In parallel, targeted supplementary feeding under the PRRO provides treatment for moderate acute malnutrition throughout the year and nationwide.
38. Geographic targeting for blanket supplementary feeding will be based primarily on nutrition indicators, focusing on regions where the GAM prevalence exceeds the 15 percent "critical" threshold among children under 5, or where it is within the "serious" range of 10-14 percent but likely to deteriorate due to aggravating factors. WFP will provide blanket supplementary feeding in targeted departments within seven regions (Diffa, Dosso, Maradi, Niamey, Tahoua, Tillaberi and Zinder). At the sub-regional level, targeted districts and communities are those identified as severe and moderately food-insecure by the early warning system and vulnerability assessments.

Targeted food assistance

39. Targeted assistance through unconditional food/cash transfers will provide relief to severely food-insecure households during the lean season. Geographic targeting is based on the household vulnerability assessment, the 2011/2012 final evaluation of the agricultural campaign, recent nutrition studies, and Integrated Food Security Phase Classification mapping. At the departmental level, WFP works with NGO partners and CCA committees to identify vulnerable communes and villages. WFP will provide food assistance in targeted rural communes within Diffa, Dosso, Maradi, Niamey, Tahoua, Tillaberi and Zinder regions. In addition, urban centres of Agadez, Tahoua, and Tillaberi with a high prevalence of severe food insecurity will be targeted.
40. The most vulnerable households will be identified jointly by NGO partners, CCA, village committees and WFP staff, using the following priority criteria: i) female-headed households - particularly those with a high dependency ratio and who are labour-constrained; ii) households with low or no cereal stocks or with few or no cattle, which have exhausted their resilience capacity; iii) households dependent on

²⁹ It is extremely difficult to identify pregnant women in Niger outside of a health structure; for this reason, the national blanket feeding strategy focuses on lactating women and children 6-23 months.

³⁰ WFP EMOP *Saving lives and improving the nutritional status of food insecure populations affected by drought and high malnutrition rates in Niger*", August 2010-June 2011.



vulnerable livelihoods (pastoralism and agro-pastoralism); iv) indebted households; v) households with malnourished children. WFP and Save the Children are deploying the household economy approach in Niger: household targeting criteria will be further refined in 2012 based on analysis that builds scenarios of the potential effects of shocks on different livelihood groups.

41. Household targeting is a challenge in Niger because of the high levels of chronic vulnerability, compounded in 2012 by the loss of economic opportunities. Local committees of community members follow up concerns of communities regarding selection. These require support from WFP and cooperating partners to ensure active engagement in oversight to ensure a transparent process and reduce exclusion errors. Sensitization campaigns at the village level encourage women's participation.
42. WFP will also provide targeted food assistance to vulnerable households displaced and affected by insecurity in Mali. Refugees/returnees are registered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with support from committees of local authorities, host community leaders, and representatives from displaced communities. Targeting of most vulnerable households hosting displaced populations will be undertaken by WFP in coordination with NGO partners, village communities, and the CCA.
43. Through this EMOP, WFP is expected to reach nearly 3 million beneficiaries over 6 months, as shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1: BENEFICIARIES BY ACTIVITY TYPE			
Activity	Male	Female	Total
Blanket supplementary feeding (BSF) - children 6-23 months	211 800	220 400	432 200
BSF - lactating women	0	97 000	97 000
Targeted food assistance (TFA) - food transfers	828 700	830 300	1 659 000
TFA - cash transfers	462 000	462 900	924 900
TFA- refugees	19 800	20 200	40 000
Total	1 522 300	1 630 800	3 153 100
Adjusted total*	1 430 000	1 538 000	2 968 000

*The total number of beneficiaries is adjusted downwards to avoid double-counting of beneficiaries assisted through more than one activity.



NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RATIONS / VALUE OF CASH TRANSFERS

44. *Blanket supplementary feeding:* WFP will provide children 6–23 months with Supercereal plus to prevent malnutrition. Lactating women with children under 6 months will receive Supercereal (with sugar integrated) and vegetable oil fortified with vitamin A.
45. *Targeted food assistance:* Unconditional food transfers will provide a ration of cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil fortified with vitamin A, allowing for 2,097 kcal per person per day, based on an average family size of seven persons. The cash transfer value has been calculated at 32,500 West African Francs (XOF) or US\$65 per household per month, which has been established in consultation with government, United Nations and NGO partners based on the average of food price projections for April-September. It will be equivalent to a daily food basket of 3.5 kg cereals, 0.7 kg pulses, and 0.14 kg vegetable oil based on the average family size of seven persons.

TABLE 2: DAILY FOOD RATION/TRANSFER BY ACTIVITY (g/person/day)				
	Blanket Supplementary Feeding		Targeted Food Assistance	
	Children 6-23 months	Lactating women	Food	Cash (US\$/person/day)
Cereals	-	-	500	-
Pulses	-	-	100	-
Vegetable oil	-	25	20	-
Supercereal plus	200	-	-	-
Supercereal	-	250	-	-
Cash (US\$)	-	-	-	US\$0.31
TOTAL	200	275	620	US\$0.31
Total kcal/person/day	840	1 171	2 097	-
Percent kcal from protein	15.2	15.4	14.3	-
Percent kcal from fat	19	30.7	14.9	-
Number of feeding days	180	180	180	180



TABLE 3: TOTAL FOOD/CASH REQUIREMENTS BY ACTIVITY (mt)

Commodity Type/Cash	BSF Children 6-23 months	BSF Lactating women	TFA-Food	TFA-Cash	Total (mt or US\$)
Cereals	-	-	111 841	-	111 841
Pulses	-	-	22 368	-	22 368
Vegetable oil	-	437	4 474	-	4 911
Supercereal plus	15 559	-	-	-	15 559
Supercereal	-	4 369	-	-	4 369
Cash	-	-	-	US\$43 666 981	US\$43 666 981
Total food (mt)	15 559	4 806	138 683	-	159 048
Total cash (US\$)	-	-	-	US\$43 666 981	US\$43 666 981

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

46. *Blanket supplementary feeding*: Aligned to national guidance on implementation of blanket supplementary feeding programmes and to ensure the widest coverage, food will be distributed from pre-determined distribution sites in the community rather than from health structures. Beneficiaries will be registered by NGO partners and provided with ration cards.³¹ Caregivers will be trained on the preparation of Supercereal plus and best feeding practices for infant and young children, with UNICEF support. As per a partnership agreement between WFP, UNICEF and the Government, WFP will provide commodities, train staff in health structures and NGO partners, and finance registration of beneficiaries and nutritional screening. This EMOP also includes technical support to government counterparts and NGO partners to enhance monitoring and reporting. WFP will provide training in food management and handling for government counterparts.

47. *Targeted food assistance* will be coordinated through the DNP-GCA. For food and cash activities, technical aspects of project implementation - including beneficiary targeting, registration, sensitization and organization at distribution points - will be undertaken by NGOs in collaboration with local authorities and WFP. Local committees of community members will be established to encourage transparency and participation. For cash activities, WFP will transfer funds to microfinance institutions (MFIs) and appropriate international NGOs for delivery of assistance; MFIs play an important role in Niger due to the limited presence of banks in rural areas. Distribution will use numbered beneficiary cards or smart cards containing memory chips;

³¹ Pregnant/lactating women and children will be screened for acute malnutrition and referred for treatment, if necessary, under PRRO 200051.



beneficiaries' fingerprints confirm receipt of the cash or food transfer. Distribution modalities, location and timing will be determined by WFP field staff and partners in cooperation with local committees.

48. WFP monitors the local market capacities to absorb additional demand without generating distortions. Targeting has been refined to consider key indicators on market functionality in addition to agro-ecological specificities, including: grain production; physical access to markets; price volatility; market performance/integration; security conditions; cash-distribution infrastructure; and the ability to cope with cash injections. With the exception of targeted urban areas (Agadez, Tahoua and Tillaberi), cash will be distributed in southern Niger where market functioning and integration is appropriate to implement large-scale cash distribution during the lean season.
49. Market monitoring, evaluation of ongoing cash-for-work activities (under the PRRO), and expectations for the lean season all suggest that the targeted areas are appropriate for cash, and will be able to ensure food availability and maintain proper market functioning during this EMOP. The cereals alpha value³² since October 2011 has risen from 0.57 to 0.74 due largely to increased millet prices in Niger but cash transfers continue to be cost-effective. For cash transfers, baseline assessments inform on the functionality and integration of markets and regular post-distribution monitoring provides updates on the impact on market functioning. If conditions in market change and cash transfers become uncompetitive or inappropriate, in-kind food assistance may be provided instead.
50. Potential risks related to cash transfers will be reduced by: collaboration with partners, authorities, local management committees, and beneficiaries to agree on security arrangements and distribution points; stakeholders being present at time of payment to ensure transparency; and establishment of local oversight committees at each site. Cash will be transferred to the implementing partner some days prior to distribution, and a daily limit for transfers will be set. In rural areas, WFP will coordinate with appropriate MFIs and international NGOs for distribution of cash transfers. In urban areas, WFP will consider mobile money transfer services through telephone companies.
51. *Partnerships*: For nutrition activities, WFP will use criteria of the national committee on blanket supplementary feeding for selection of partners. For targeted food/cash assistance, WFP has a pool of technically competent potential partners (NGOs, MFIs) in each region that are selected on the basis of: i) WFP's partner evaluation exercise; ii) recommendations from WFP sub-offices working closely in the field in coordination with partners; and iii) the quality of partner project proposals. The risk analysis of MFIs is performed by the WFP Legal Office. The partner pool has significantly reduced the time needed to launch new food/cash distributions. WFP has identified six additional appropriate MFI partners (to the three WFP already engaged under the PRRO) and five NGOs partners for cash transfers. Partnerships with NGOs will be formalized through field-level agreements. With MFIs, WFP's standard contract for financial services will be used. All cooperating partners provide regular monitoring distribution reports, narrative reports and a final report.
52. *Procurement*: Niger is a landlocked country, and internationally procured commodities can take up to three-four months to arrive. In order to reduce lead time, WFP has increasingly relied upon regional procurement, particularly for cereals and pulses. Availability and market prices will continue to allow for procurement within the region in the short term. However, price increases and high demand leading up to and during the lean season would be less favourable for local and regional

³² If the alpha value is significantly less than 1, cash transfers may be the most cost-effective option.



procurement – particularly for cereals. WFP will diversify suppliers within the region and use extra-regional supplies. For cereals, WFP expects to procure 36 percent in the region (Bénin and Togo) and 64 percent internationally. Fortified and blended nutritional products will be imported from Europe, South Africa or North America.

53. WFP's forward purchasing facility (FPF) has been activated for the Sahel region and will be crucial to secure advanced purchases of cereals, Supercereal plus, pulses, and vegetable oil at favourable prices. Cash transfers will further reduce lead times.
54. *Logistics*: to avoid port congestion and timely arrival of internationally purchased commodities, WFP has opened additional supply corridors. Internationally procured food will arrive through Lomé in Togo (40 percent), Cotonou in Benin (40 percent), and Tema in Ghana (20 percent); Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire and Dakar in Senegal could provide additional corridors if required.
55. Internationally procured food will be delivered from ports to extended delivery points in Agadez, Maradi, Niamey Tahoua and Zinder. WFP has warehouses in seven locations in Niger with 40,000 mt storage capacity. Ten mobile warehouses can be installed for additional storage. Food will be dispatched from WFP warehouses to partners and distribution points, mainly using commercial trucks.
56. Landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) costs are high as Niger is landlocked and is a food-deficit country, making WFP heavily dependent on cross-border land transportation for international and regional procurement.
57. A WFP regional special operation (SO) will provide further logistical support to Sahel operations, including enhancement of access corridors and ports, and support to regional procurement WFP manages United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) under SO 200316, which includes a contingency for airlift of light cargo, including high-energy foods.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

58. WFP has a comprehensive results based management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in Niger (see logical framework Annex II). A WFP M&E officer provides training and coordinates food aid monitors in Diffa, Maradi, Tillaberi, Tahoua and Zinder sub-offices.
59. Schedules will be developed to ensure regular monitoring of activities during and after distribution by WFP and partner staff. Deliveries will be reported daily and distribution figures monthly. Monitoring reports will be prepared monthly.
60. Post-distribution monitoring allows WFP to evaluate operational performance and the impact of interventions using food consumption score, coping strategy index, dietary diversity and cash utilization. WFP will coordinate evaluation activities with INS.
61. Following recommendations of the nutrition cluster and the evaluation of EMOP 200170, WFP will conduct an impact evaluation for blanket supplementary feeding in 2012. Systematic monitoring of a representative sample of beneficiaries will evaluate operational performance for implementation and ration utilization. The prevalence of acute malnutrition and child mortality will be assessed by a national nutrition survey in June 2012.



HAND-OVER STRATEGY

62. This EMOP is designed to save lives and protect the nutritional status during the difficult six-month lean season in 2012. WFP's post-lean season strategy will be based on close monitoring of crop seasons, markets, admission rates in nutrition feeding centres and the national nutrition survey. PRRO 200051 will allow transition from relief to recovery following the lean season.
63. Improving and sustaining food security and nutrition in Niger is a long-term challenge given the structural obstacles and recurring shocks. WFP will work with Government and partners to strengthen health structures. WFP will continue to work with DNP-GCA and development partners to reinforce the Government's response capacity in livelihood protection, cash and food-based safety nets and community resilience. Technical support will enhance government capacity in vulnerability analysis and mapping, monitoring and evaluation, early-warning systems, and cash and cereal reserves.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

64. *Contextual risks:* Cereal deficits at the national and regional (Sahel) level, rising food and transport costs, and anticipated high demand by national governments could restrict WFP's ability to procure enough food in the region within the required timeframe. The security in the Sahel region is fragile and could deteriorate. Increased and protracted displacement of households fleeing Mali would result in additional relief needs. The EMOP could be adjusted through a budget revision as necessary to address the needs of potential additional refugees/displaced persons.
65. *Programmatic risks:* Particular attention will be given to enhance monitoring and reporting systems to ensure that targeting of food and nutrition assistance is appropriate and effective. WFP will help strengthen the capacity and reliability of partners to manage cash-based programmes.
66. *Institutional risks:* While forward purchasing efforts are being made, the risk of food pipeline breaks remains. Since the last quarter of 2011, WFP has communicated regularly with donors regarding the looming crisis and anticipated needs and shortfalls, and has already received indication of bilateral and multilateral funding.
67. In the event of limited or late funding, the ration size for targeted food assistance may be reduced in order to reach all targeted beneficiaries. There is also the risk of a lack of funding for the on-going PRRO, which would compromise treatment of moderate acute malnutrition and the transition to livelihood support and strengthened resilience.

SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

68. Niger faces an increasingly complex and geographically varied insecurity. Terrorist groups are a considerable security threat in the north, where foreigners have been kidnapped. The Nigerien national armed forces have been attacked in Agadez, where, generally, the political security situation is unstable. Since the end of December 2011, northern Nigeria has witnessed a series of security incidents and there is concern that Boko Haram factions could cross into southern Niger, particularly around Diffa and Maradi.



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69. Agadez, northern Tahoua, and the capital (Niamey) are classified as United Nations security phase 3; all other regions are security phase 2. The WFP country office and sub-offices are compliant with the minimum operating security standards and minimum security telecommunications standards; security plans are updated regularly. WFP has reinforced its security staffing capacity and strengthened security mitigation measures in country and sub-offices.
70. WFP manages air transport services to the humanitarian community in Niger under UNHAS and can scale up destinations and frequency of flights as necessary for security purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

71. The Executive Director and Director-General of FAO are requested to approve the proposed emergency operation (Niger 200398).

APPROVAL

.....
 Josette Sheeran
 Executive Director
 United Nations World Food Programme

Date:

.....
 José Graziano da Silva
 Director-General
 Food and Agriculture Organization of
 the United Nations

Date:.....



ANNEX I-A

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN			
Food	Quantity (mt)	Value (US\$)	Value (US\$)
Cereals	111,841	40,638,600	
Pulses	22,368	12,210,928	
Oil and fats	4,911	5,846,791	
Mixed and blended food	19,928	21,000,126	
Others	0	0	
Total food	159,048	79,696,445	
Cash transfers		43,666,981	
Voucher transfers		0	
Subtotal food and transfers			123,363,426
External transport			18,859,033
Landside transport, storage and handling			49,229,974
Other direct operational costs			19,563,209
Direct support costs (see Annex I-B)			8,846,412
Total WFP direct costs			219,862,054
Indirect support costs (7 percent)			15,390,344
TOTAL WFP COSTS			235,252,398



ANNEX I-B

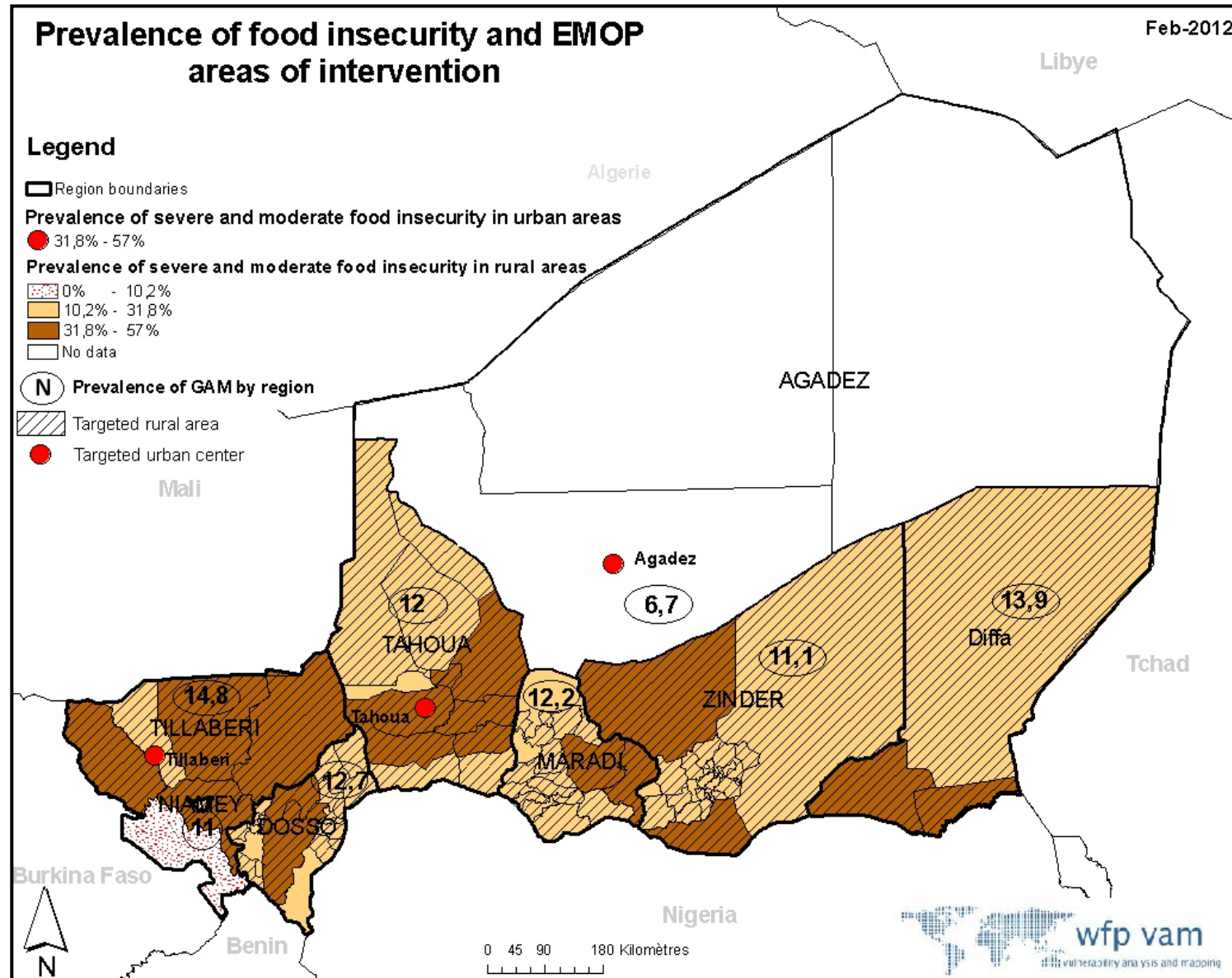
DIRECT SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS (US\$)	
Staff and staff-related costs	
International professional staff	3,161,305
International general service staff	00
Local staff - national officers	00
Local staff - general service	00
Local staff - temporary assistance	307,283
Local staff - overtime	56,750
Hazard pay and hardship allowance	00
International consultants	735,091
Local consultants	72,875
United Nations Volunteers	318,844
Commercial consultancy services	00
Staff duty travel	1,743,233
Subtotal	6,395,381
Rental of facility	125,817
Utilities general	47,000
Office supplies and other consumables	60,500
Communications and IT services	455,000
Equipment repair and maintenance	365,000
Vehicle running cost and maintenance	390,000
Office set-up and repairs	00
UN organization services	34,000
Subtotal	1,477,317
Vehicle leasing	76,500
TC/IT equipment	310,214
Local security costs	587,000
Subtotal	973,714
TOTAL DIRECT SUPPORT COSTS	8,846,412



ANNEX II - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

Results	Performance indicators	Risk, Assumptions
Strategic Objective 1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies		
Outcome 1.1 Stabilize acute malnutrition among targeted population groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 in targeted populations (using weight for height) <12% 	Assumptions: Blanket supplementary feeding carried out as planned UNICEF, WHO and NGOs have adequate resources to implement nutritional mandates Functioning government nutrition-coordination mechanisms
Output 1.1.1 and 1.2.1 Food and non-food items distributed in sufficient quantity and quality to targeted women, men, girls and boys under secure conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Quantity of food distributed, by type and activity as of percentage of planned: 100% ➤ No. of people by age and gender receiving food assistance, by category as percentage of planned: 100% ➤ Quantity of fortified and blended foods, by type as percentage of planned: 100% ➤ No. security incidents during food distributions 	Assumptions Adequate human and technical capacity is available among cooperating partners Adequate and timely resources are available according to distribution plans
Outcome 1.2 Improved food consumption over assistance period for targeted emergency-affected households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Food consumption score > 28 for 70% of targeted populations ➤ Dietary diversity score > 4 for 70% of targeted populations ➤ Coping strategy index < 10 	Assumptions Security prevails throughout project implementation Government and NGO partners maintain complementary assistance as planned
Output 1.2.2 Cash distributed in sufficient quantity and under secure conditions through targeted assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Total US\$ distributed through cash as 100% of planned ➤ No. of people by age and gender receiving cash assistance, by category as 100% of planned ➤ 100% of beneficiaries receiving cash on time ➤ Number of security incidents during cash distributions 	Assumptions Adequate human and technical capacity is available among cooperating partners Sufficient and timely funding is available according to distribution plans





LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

BSF	blanket supplementary feeding
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CCA	<i>Cellule crises alimentaires</i> - food crisis response unit
CILSS	<i>Comité permanent inter-États de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel</i> - Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
DNPGCA	<i>Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion des Crises Alimentaires</i> - National Mechanism for Prevention and Management of Food Crises
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission
EMOP	emergency operation
FPE	Forward Purchase Facility
GAM	global acute malnutrition
INS	<i>Institut National de la Statistique</i> – National Institute of Statistics
LTSH	landside transport, storage and handling
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFI	microfinance institutions
MUAC	mid-upper arm circumference
NGO	non-governmental organization
OPVN	<i>Office des Produits Vivriers du Niger</i> - National Food Products Board of Niger
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
SAP	<i>Système d'Alerte Précoce</i> – early warning system
SO	special operation
TFA	targeted food assistance
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Services
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
XOF	West African Francs

