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U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)

Sahelian West Africa – Humanitarian Emergency

Fact Sheet #7, Fiscal Year (FY) 2005

September 16, 2005

Note: The last fact sheet was dated September 9, 2005.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
Affected population – Niger	3,000,000	WFP ¹ , September 15, 2005
Affected population – Mali	1,000,000	WFP, August 5, 2005
Affected population – Mauritania	600,000	WFP, August 5, 2005
Affected population – Burkina Faso	500,000	WFP, August 5, 2005
Total Affected Population²	5,100,000	

Total FY 2005 USAID Assistance to Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Sahel Regional Locust Response..... \$134,463,406

CURRENT SITUATION

Niger Update

- The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) visited the weekly cereal and livestock market in Baleyara, Tillaberi Province on September 11. Through observations and discussions with local vendors and villagers, the USAID/DART learned that the harvest has begun in Baleyara, cereal prices have decreased, and animal health has improved notably. These observations reinforce the conclusion that the most severe period of food insecurity, known as the hungry season, is quickly drawing to a close in this area and many other parts of Niger.
- Through its assessments, the USAID/DART has determined that September harvests will markedly improve food security in Baleyara, Tillaberi Province, and many other villages in Niger. The vast majority of Nigeriens rely on individual farm production not only for food security, but also as income for other household needs such as health care, education, shelter, clothing, and debt reimbursement.
- Areas currently experiencing the highest reported malnutrition rates, including Maradi and Zinder, lie in the rain-fed agricultural livelihood zone of Niger, the southernmost part of the country. This zone experiences malnutrition rates that annually approach or exceed emergency threshold levels. These malnutrition rates are caused, in part, by poor behavioral practices such as early weaning and unsafe water and sanitation practices. This year's food insecurity, fueled by access constraints resulting in unusually high food prices on local markets, pushed malnutrition rates for this zone higher than normal.
- According to Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) representatives, Niger's harvest will be fully underway between September 15 and September 30. While the harvest will not begin at exactly the same time for all targeted beneficiaries, there remains only a small distribution window for implementing partners to deliver all remaining commodities to targeted populations without risk of jeopardizing local market systems with free food distributions in the midst of a harvest. According to the USAID/DART, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) has made significant efforts to collaborate with and swiftly meet the distribution needs of implementing partners.
- Between April and August 2005, child mortality rose sharply in Niger. This can be attributed in large part to a spike in malaria and diarrheal diseases during the rainy season. The U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) reports that malaria, which reaches its peak each year between July and September, when the number of cases reported per week increases as much as five-fold, can be associated with half of all child mortality in Niger.
- In addition to malaria, diarrheal diseases typically increase during the rainy season due to the consumption of surface water. This practice is particularly dangerous for children under the age of two, and very few mothers in Niger practice exclusive breastfeeding. Even those who have access to potable water often consume surface water during the rainy season, since it can be collected for free and is easily accessible to those working in the fields far from water pumps.

Mali Update

- According to the USAID/DART, water availability for crop cultivation, animal husbandry, and human consumption in the three northern regions of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu is highly variable in time and space during each year,

¹ U.N. World Food Program

² Affected populations may have varying levels of need, from complete food distributions to little or no assistance.

leading to extreme fragility of the food supply in drought periods. With poor rainfall in 2004 followed by spotty rains this year, the critical period for human and animal water shortages will occur from April through July 2006.

- On September 6, the USAID/DART met with the governor of Kidal. The governor emphasized that pastoralists had suffered high animal losses in the past two years. He noted that it will likely take several years for herds to recover from a year as bad as this. In general, it takes three years to recover a herd of goats or sheep, four years to recover cows, and seven years to recover camels. The governor stressed the importance of good animal husbandry that calls for prioritizing quality of the herd over quantity.
- On September 6, the USAID/DART also met with the mayor and residents of Abeibara, Kidal Region. The mayor reported that this year was particularly bad for debts incurred by the population. One man shared his personal experience with the USAID/DART, explaining that he was 3 million Communaute Financiere Africaine francs (\$6,000) in debt and that he only had 10 goats. He previously had 70 goats and 100 sheep. He sold some of the animals, but most of them died. He became indebted to purchase food for his family and fodder and water for his animals.
- On September 1, the USAID/DART met with nomadic tribes north of Timbuktu, who cited as their biggest problems food shortages due to high prices, limited access to safe water supplies, heavy livestock losses, and poor access to health care. Debt levels are high, and the pastoralists are uncertain how debt will be repaid. Due to difficulties accessing the area and concerns about security, few NGOs have worked in this area in recent years. Residents interviewed expressed interest in participating in food-for-work programs.

Burkina Faso Update

- Through its assessments in Burkina Faso, the USAID/DART concluded that there is consensus among the Government of Burkina Faso (GOBF), U.N. agencies, and NGOs that Burkina Faso is not experiencing a generalized food security crisis. However, localized food shortages exist due to availability and access problems. Discussions with local residents and GOBF representatives in the Northern and Sahel regions indicate that the crop outlook for the Sahel Region is promising, and the harvest will begin as early as mid-September. In contrast, the Northern Region, which was less affected by last year's locust infestation and drought, is experiencing gaps in rainfall at critical times resulting in the drying of corn and millet crops. In this region, the harvest will begin in early- to mid-October and is expected to be heavily compromised by the gaps in rainfall during July and August.
- Due to early GOBF interventions, such as subsidized cereal sales, free distributions from the National Security Stock (SNS), and concerted effort by U.N. agencies and NGOs to conduct targeted distributions and subsidized sales programs, the localized food crisis in Burkina Faso was contained, and a generalized food crisis has been averted. Overall, since November 2004, the GOBF, WFP, and NGOs sold or distributed 33,000 MT of food commodities in affected areas.
- The USAID/DART noted that a large number of households, particularly those in the Northern Region of Burkina Faso, are indebted. With minimal cereal production likely from the 2005/2006 crop, families will be unable to repay their loans for the second consecutive year. The USAID/DART reported that water retention structures, better management of available water, and cereal banks were widely noted as measures needed to improve the resilience of communities to bear future food security shocks.
- The USAID/DART concluded its assessment of Burkina Faso in early September, and the last remaining USAID/DART member departed the country on September 8.

Mauritania Update

- On September 11, the USAID/DART concluded its assessments in Mauritania. Prior to the USAID/DART's departure, the U.S. Ambassador expressed support for USAID's plan to continue monitoring the situation. He noted that although additional emergency interventions are unnecessary, Mauritania would welcome additional USAID development assistance.
- The majority of rural Mauritians depend more heavily on food purchases than on food production, even in good years. Pastoralists who can depend more heavily on livestock for their household livelihoods are more food secure than those who depend on a combination of agriculture, migratory and local labor, and cash inputs from various sources to meet household food requirements. During lean times, the poor are heavily dependent upon food purchases paid for by the sale of assets, remittances and gifts from wealthier family or community members, and labor or migration for employment to generate cash or in-kind payments.
- In most areas, a normal amount of rain has fallen during the current rainy season. Some areas, however, have received below-average rainfalls. A number of factors indicate that for both agriculture and livestock, this year could be better than the previous four or five years in Mauritania.
- On September 8, FEWS NET raised the number of people vulnerable to food insecurity from 1.0 to approximately 1.2 million, and the situation therefore warrants close monitoring. For the most part, food insecure communities are rural communities or small regional towns located primarily in the agro-pastoral, rain-fed agricultural, and Senegal River valley irrigated flood plain agricultural zones, in the southern third of rural Mauritania along the Senegal River and Mali border. These agricultural and agro-pastoral areas include southern Trarza, Brakna, Assaba, Gorgol, Guidimaka, southwest Tagant, and southern Hod el Gharbi and Hod ech Chargui Regions.

Pockets of food insecurity may also exist in zones with oases and among pastoralists who practice limited cultivation, which include those living in northern Trarza Region, southwestern Adrar, western Tagant, and parts of Inchiri Region.

- Through its assessments, the USAID/DART concluded that Mauritania is not currently experiencing famine or pre-famine conditions. The USAID/DART observed evidence of chronic malnutrition and stunting attributable to long-term developmental issues due to widespread poverty, poor feeding and health practices, and inadequate quantity and quality of water. The USAID/DART did not observe indications of widespread acute malnutrition but acknowledged that nutritional surveillance is weak in Mauritania and isolated cases are assumed to be present. The USAID/DART concluded that in some areas, Mauritania continues to experience serious food insecurity requiring food assistance. In light of the high level of chronic poverty and reports of high levels of indebtedness, well-targeted and properly implemented emergency and non-emergency food and non-food assistance is still required.

USAID ASSISTANCE

Regional Response

- The USAID-supported West Africa Regional Program (WARP) handles West African development challenges that are most effectively addressed at a regional level. WARP works closely with USAID missions in the region, including USAID's bilateral missions in Mali and Senegal, and U.S. embassies in countries where USAID does not have a mission. The Sahelian countries benefit from WARP through their membership in such organizations as the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and CILSS. WARP supports activities in 19 West African countries, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and Niger. WARP representatives are currently working in the region to develop strategies to control market fluctuation and implement near-term market interventions.
- In response to the 2004/2005 locust infestation, USAID provided nearly \$14 million to support locust control efforts throughout Sahelian West Africa in FY 2005. Through a grant to FAO, USAID supported agricultural relief and recovery programs, including the provision of livestock feed support and agricultural inputs for dry season gardening activities, in Niger. USAID provided support to the Government of Mali for combating the locust infestation, providing pesticides, and funding related control activities. In Mauritania and Senegal, USAID supported locust prevention and response activities, including an aerial spraying campaign.

Niger

- USAID has provided more than \$19 million in assistance to Niger to date in FY 2005. These funds have supported food security and agriculture projects, emergency and development food assistance, and airlifts of fortified food for emergency nutrition programs. USAID assistance funds programs focused on community-based development, child survival and health, youth, and human rights. USAID has also provided 12,230 MT of development food assistance and 7,860 MT of emergency food assistance to Niger in FY 2005.

Mali

- To date in FY 2005, USAID has provided nearly \$40 million in assistance to Mali. In FY 2005, USAID has provided 1,710 MT of development food commodities and 1,000 MT of emergency food commodities to Mali. Additionally, USAID's development program in Mali works to expand economic opportunities, particularly for the rural poor; provides high impact health services to improve the health and welfare of women and children; mitigates the spread of HIV/AIDS; improves the quality of basic education; consolidates democracy through support of decentralization; supports human rights; and accelerates overall development by making information more widely accessible.

Mauritania

- To date in FY 2005, USAID has provided more than \$16 million to various programs in Mauritania. USAID activities in Mauritania primarily focus on improving food security. USAID has provided 19,330 MT of development food assistance and 16,940 MT of emergency food assistance to Mauritania in FY 2005. USAID also funded programs addressing human rights and community-based development activities.

Burkina Faso

- USAID has provided approximately \$18 million in assistance to date in FY 2005. USAID focuses the majority of its assistance to Burkina Faso on improving food security. In FY 2005, USAID has provided 24,240 MT of development food commodities. USAID also funds programs that support local human rights, community-based development activities, political party development, and technical assistance for elections.

Senegal

- To date in FY 2005, USAID has provided more than \$31 million to Senegal. USAID activities in Senegal focus largely on the sectors of health, economic growth, agriculture, and education. USAID has provided 4,390 MT of development food assistance to Senegal in FY 2005.

BACKGROUND

- In 2004, an early end to the rains and desert locust damage to pasture lands adversely affected pasture availability and cereal production in Sahelian West Africa. These events exacerbated existing poverty and vulnerabilities and resulted in elevated food insecurity in agro-pastoral and pastoral zones in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and

Mauritania. The situation in Niger is considered to be an emergency, with more than 2.7 million people affected. In Burkina Faso, Mali, and Mauritania, more than 2 million people are affected, and the situation in these countries warrants close monitoring.

- Regional assessments have used the word “affected” to impart that this population was impacted in some way by either locust infestation or the early cessation of rains. Affected populations have varying levels of humanitarian needs. Some may require food distributions, while others may require little or no assistance of any kind. USAID recognizes that endemic poverty and underdevelopment are critical factors contributing to the current humanitarian emergency and is committed to addressing these factors through an appropriate combination of USAID development and humanitarian assistance.
- According to the USAID-funded FEWS NET, recent assessments continue to show consistent rainfall and good crop and pasture conditions in most of Niger and almost all of the rest of Sahelian West Africa. The short-term outlook for these conditions is for steady improvement. Prospects for crop harvests in Niger and the rest of the Sahel are generally good to excellent, with the exception of certain areas in the pastoral zone of the Tillaberi and western Tahoua regions in Niger; these zones had intermittent rains and an extended dry spell this year. Loss of assets or livestock over the past year may result in continued vulnerability for some families beyond the harvest.
- In response to the humanitarian emergency, USAID deployed a USAID/DART to Sahelian West Africa on August 3, 2005. USAID/DART staff include public health and nutrition specialists, a water and sanitation specialist, food aid officers, and information officers. Additional USAID/DART members already in the region include regional advisors for North and West Africa, a development officer, and a FEWS NET representative. On August 11, USAID activated a Response Management Team (RMT) in Washington, D.C. to assist the USAID/DART.
- FAO reported on August 25 that low numbers of scattered solitary adult locusts have been found in Mauritania, Mali, and Niger, and reports of limited locust breeding have come from Mauritania. Ground surveys supplemented by helicopters are underway in the Sahel to detect the first signs of an increase in the locust population. However, locust control operations in these countries have not been needed this growing season.
- Assistant Administrator Michael Hess traveled to Niger and Mali from August 19 to 28 to visit USAID-funded projects in affected areas and conduct humanitarian assessments with USAID/DART representatives in the field. Assistant Administrator Hess and his delegation reported that fields are green and crops appear abundant and healthy throughout Mali, and that Niger will probably have a good harvest this year. However, Assistant Administrator Hess expressed concern with household debt levels throughout the region due to household borrowing to survive the current lean season and carry-over debt from the lean season in 2004.

USAID ASSISTANCE TO NIGER

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE³			
CRS	Food Security/Agriculture	Tillaberi and Zinder	\$494,513
FAO	Food Security/Agriculture	Countrywide	\$50,000
UNICEF	Airlift of 251 MT of fortified food for emergency nutrition programs	Countrywide	\$543,826
World Vision	Nutrition	Maradi and Zinder	\$1,087,711
Helen Keller International	Nutrition	Diffa	\$1,091,471
WFP	Humanitarian Air Passenger Service	Countrywide	\$125,000
CDC	Nutritional Survey	Countrywide	\$97,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$3,489,521
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
Consortium including Africare, Catholic Relief Services, CARE, and Helen Keller International	12,230 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Development Food Assistance	Agadez, Dosso, Tahoua, and Zinder	\$7,390,000
WFP	7,860 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$5,800,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$13,190,000
USAID/AFR ASSISTANCE			
	Youth Programs		\$500,000
	Democracy and Human Rights Fund		\$92,000
	Special Self-Help		\$74,000

	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative		\$1,050,000
	WARP Support		\$732,000
TOTAL USAID/AFR			\$2,448,000
TOTAL USAID ASSISTANCE TO NIGER IN FY 2005			\$19,127,521

³ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 16, 2005.

USAID ASSISTANCE TO MALI

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE⁴			
Africare	1,710 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Development Food Assistance	Timbuktu Region	\$930,000
WFP	1,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$667,200
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$1,597,200
USAID/AFR ASSISTANCE			
	Economic Growth ⁵		\$1,723,000
	Education		\$5,755,000
	Democracy and Governance		\$1,447,000
	Health		\$15,705,000
	Agriculture/Environment ⁵		\$11,044,000
	Democracy and Human Rights Fund		\$70,000
	Special Self-Help Fund		\$77,000
	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative		\$725,000
	WARP Support		\$1,389,000
TOTAL USAID/AFR			\$37,935,000
TOTAL USAID ASSISTANCE TO MALI IN FY 2005			\$39,532,200

⁴ For Reporting purposes, USAID/Mali's P.L. 480 Title II program is combined with the P.L. 480 Title II program in Chad. The implementing partner is responsible for reporting on both Mali and Chad. The referenced figures are therefore not reflected in Mali's Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ).

⁵ This total includes funding for the locust response.

USAID ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE⁶			
DFS	Locust Response		\$177,777
World Vision	Supplementary Feeding Program		\$50,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$227,777
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
World Vision and the Doulos Community	19,330 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Development Food Assistance	Nouakchott	\$6,579,600
WFP	16,940 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Brakna, Gorgol, Tagant, Assaba, and Hodh El Gharbi	\$8,811,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$15,390,600
USAID/AFR ASSISTANCE			
	Democracy and Human Rights Fund		\$80,000
	Special Self-Help Fund		\$87,000
	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative		\$250,000
	WARP Support		\$459,000
TOTAL USAID/AFR			\$876,000
TOTAL USAID ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA IN FY 2005			\$16,494,377

⁶ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 16, 2005.

USAID ASSISTANCE TO BURKINA FASO

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
Africare, Catholic Relief Services	24,240 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Development Food Assistance	Zondoma province (Africare); all 45 provinces (CRS)	\$15,570,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$15,570,000
USAID/AFR ASSISTANCE			
	Democracy and Human Rights Fund		\$69,500
	Special Self-Help fund		\$104,000
	WARP Support		\$1,628,000
	Economic Support Fund		\$463,000
TOTAL USAID/AFR			\$2,264,500
TOTAL USAID ASSISTANCE TO BURKINA FASO IN FY 2005			\$17,834,500

USAID ASSISTANCE TO SENEGAL

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
Counterpart International	4,390 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Development Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$2,268,700
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$2,268,700
USAID/AFR ASSISTANCE			
	Economic Growth ⁷		\$2,474,810
	Basic Education		\$3,153,000
	Democracy and Governance		\$1,655,000
	Health		\$14,775,000
	Agriculture/Environment ⁷		\$5,188,000
	Human Rights		\$500,000
	Democracy and Human Rights Fund		\$70,500
	Special Self-Help Fund		\$80,000
	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative		\$175,000
	WARP Support		\$803,000
TOTAL USAID/AFR			\$28,874,310
TOTAL USAID ASSISTANCE TO SENEGAL IN FY 2005			\$31,143,010

⁷This total includes funding for the locust response.

USAID REGIONAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCUST RESPONSE

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE⁸			
FAO	Locust Response	Chad	\$50,000
AFCAP	Locust Response	Mauritania and Senegal	\$2,555,761
DFS	Locust Response	Mauritania and Senegal	\$3,101,735
Admin	Locust Response	Mauritania and Senegal	\$74,302
USAID/Senegal	Locust Response	Mauritania and Senegal	\$50,000
Gov. of Morocco	Locust Response	Morocco	\$1,500,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$7,331,798

USAID/AFR ASSISTANCE⁹			
USAID/WARP	Locust Response	Regional	\$1,500,000
TOTAL USAID/AFR			\$1,500,000
USAID/ANE ASSISTANCE			
Gov. of Morocco	Locust Response	Morocco	\$1,500,000
TOTAL USAID/ANE			\$1,500,000
TOTAL USAID REGIONAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2005			\$10,331,798

⁸ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 16, 2005.

⁹ In addition, USAID/AFR provided \$1 million to Mali and \$2.5 million to Senegal for locust response, which is reflected in the “USAID Assistance to Mali” and “USAID Assistance to Senegal” charts.

TOTAL USAID ASSISTANCE TO BURKINA FASO, MALI, MAURITANIA, NIGER, AND SAHEL LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2005	\$134,463,406
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PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. Information on identifying such organizations is available in the “How Can I Help” section of www.usaid.gov – Keyword: Sahel, or by calling The Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) at 703-276-1914.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov – Keyword: Donations
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.