Period covered by report: 03/03/2012 to 05/05/2012

Time of validity of report: hh/mm (local) – hh/mm (UTC)

DG ECHO Field Offices: West Africa Regional Support Office in Dakar and Country Offices in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad

Number of people affected (source):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Source of information</th>
<th>Persons estimated Food Insecure</th>
<th>Persons Severely Food Insecure</th>
<th>Children &lt; 5 affected by SAM in 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
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<td>6,421,934</td>
<td>3,505,794</td>
<td>331,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>587,968</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>EFSA/WFP Dec. 2011</td>
<td>3,600,000</td>
<td>1,180,000</td>
<td>127,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>ECHO est. from SAP/CSA data Feb. 2012</td>
<td>1,787,580</td>
<td>1,354,167</td>
<td>175,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>CPSA Feb. 2012 April-June estimates</td>
<td>2,065,738</td>
<td>887,879</td>
<td>99,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>SAP/WFP Feb. 2012</td>
<td>739,251</td>
<td>282,007</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>FAO, April 2012</td>
<td>1,363,791</td>
<td>310,000</td>
<td>ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-Cameroon</td>
<td>(SAM Data: UNICEF)</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>55,119</td>
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<tr>
<td>N-Nigeria</td>
<td>(SAM Data: UNICEF)</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>207,718</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,002,294</td>
<td>8,107,815</td>
<td>1,027,915</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. A regional analysis meeting by CILSS on the basis of the Cadre Harmonisé methodology took place in Niamey in the first week of April 2012. The food and nutrition security situation in Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad was assessed for March and forecasted for June 2012. Findings were presented by CILSS & FEWSNET at the RPCA – Club de Sahel/OECD meeting of 12-13 April in Paris. Estimates of numbers of persons affected by the crisis were not yet updated.

Number of refugees and/or IDPs (UN) resulting from the political crisis in Mali and its spill-over to neighbouring states: 56,664 refugees in Burkina, 62,871 in Mauritania, 39,388 in Niger and 30,000 announced by the government in Algeria as per 30/04/2012. The estimated number of IDP’s in Mali is 130,000.

Number of dead (source): ND

Number of wounded (source): N/A

Executive summary/highlights:

- Food prices are continuing to rise further aggravating food insecurity. This was confirmed in the recent analysis of the food and nutrition security outlook to June 2012 by the West African regional organisation CILSS (Comité permanent Inter-État de Lutte contre la...
Sécheresse au Sahel). The crisis is expected to reach Phase 4\(^1\) (Extreme) in many parts of Mauritania, Mali, Chad and possibly Phase 5 (famine) in isolated conflict areas of northern Mali.

- There is no regional CAP but UN OCHA estimates a substantial funding shortfall on the basis of the assumption that the total over-all funding needs in response to the Sahel 2012 food security and nutrition crisis are likely to exceed 1 Billion USD. A number of appeals are currently being revised.
- Agencies on the ground are very concerned at the short time left to mobilise aid before the peak of the crisis in June/July.
- The funding shortfall for WFP alone is 290 MUSD for the vital months from May to September. This is needed to resource 159,000 MT of in-kind food, 55 MUSD for Cash and Voucher actions and 8,320 MT of supplementary food products for the treatment of nutrition.
- The funding shortfall for UNICEF is 75 MUSD for integrated nutrition care until the end of the year.
- The food crisis in the Sahel is further aggravated by the ongoing political crisis in Mali and its spill-over to neighbouring states (see separate ECHO SITREPs and updates on Mali).

1. OVERALL SITUATION

The large production deficits for the main cereals harvests are now confirmed as being on average 21% less this season as compared to last year and 3% less than the average of the past 5 years (not corrected for the population increase of up to 20% over that period). Unusually high and rising food prices (in 90% of all monitored areas, in some markets representing a 100% increase for staple cereals such as millet compared to the same period last year) are restricting access to food for the poorest populations and persistent high malnutrition rates are being reported throughout the Sahel region.

\(^1\) CILSS uses its Cadre Harmonisé methodology, including a majority of elements from the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) tool.
The CILSS ‘Cadre Harmonisé’ (CH) methodology and its complementary Household Economy Analysis methodology are now recognised as essential tools for food and nutrition security vulnerability mapping and needs-based targeting in the Sahel.

A first-ever comprehensive regional analysis workshop based on the Cadre Harmonisé was organised by the CILSS’ Technical Committee (including AGRHYMET, FEWSNET, WFP, FAO) with the participation of ACF, OXFAM and SC UK in Niamey from 2 to 7 April. The meeting reached consensus on the food and nutrition security situation as per end of March 2012 in six countries, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, as well as on a forecast for June 2012.

The maps validated by the analysis confirm a serious and evolving crisis into June, exacerbated by the situation of political instability and conflict in Mali.
The analysis, maps and recommendations were presented and adopted at the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) meeting held at the Sahel West Africa Club/ OECD in Paris on 12 and 13 April. As the situation in North Mali is so unpredictable, the map was left without colour by consensus, although an indication of a risk of famine (Phase 5) in localised areas - already considered to be in a Phase 4 situation in March – was deemed justified.

There are currently several African initiatives (AU, ECOWAS, CILSS, UEMOA) to organise high-level meetings on the crisis, possibly in May/June.

The adoption of an ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy at the special ministerial meeting on the ECOWAS Humanitarian Affairs Policy and Plan of Action, in Cotonou on 9 March 2012 is noteworthy.

2. AID AND ASSISTANCE REQUIRED / NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Prices for staple cereals such as millet have continued to rise in the main Sahel countries over the last month. The price of a 100 Kg bag increased with 9% in Niamey, 23% in Bamako and 25% in Ouagadougou between March and April 2012, and with 7%, 100% and 83% respectively compared to April 2011 (see graph below).
The impact of the food-security crisis especially the exceptionally high and rising prices for basic foods is increasingly being felt. However, the estimated number of persons in severe food insecurity has not been revised upwards over the last month, with the exception of a sizeable population in the Gambia that were recently assessed as requiring emergency assistance. But there are worrying signs of a deepening crisis in terms of the sharp rise in admissions of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

This is particularly the case in Niger where an important increase in admissions is being reported, notably in the highly affected area of Tillabéry of western Niger. The increase in SAM in the Tillabéry region, which also is hosting many of the refugees fleeing the conflict in northern Mali, resulted in the launch of the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP) operation in the Sahel by WFP in Simiri in the Tillabéry Region on 26 March.

UNICEF estimate that at least 1,027,915 children under the age of 5, and perhaps up to 25% more due to the deteriorating situation are at risk of SAM in the Sahel region of West Africa this year. The reported trend in Niger is an early indication that the caseload may indeed exceed the initial planning figures.

WFP’s Regional Response Framework (RRF) for the 2012 Sahel crisis reflects a sizeable proportion of the crisis response actions to mitigate excess malnutrition this year, notably a large BSFP for children between 6 and 23 months and Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women (PBW’s). These are the most vulnerable and most at risk of mortality and acute malnutrition caused by the
crisis. The intervention spans the hunger-gap from April to September (which includes the crisis-peak period) and is being implemented in the same areas where Targeted Food Assistance (TFA) distributions are taking place for the most severely food insecure persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Figures Feb.2012</th>
<th>Niger</th>
<th>Chad</th>
<th>Mali</th>
<th>Mauritania</th>
<th>Burkina Faso</th>
<th>Senegal</th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme</td>
<td>6-59 months</td>
<td>725 094</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>172 988</td>
<td>40 120</td>
<td>101 611</td>
<td>68 409</td>
<td>91 099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PBWs</td>
<td>177 000</td>
<td>70 000</td>
<td>36 800</td>
<td>14 111</td>
<td>58 893</td>
<td>9 426</td>
<td>25 318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme</td>
<td>6-23 months</td>
<td>432 181</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>161 997</td>
<td>64 500</td>
<td>75 500</td>
<td>31 641</td>
<td>23 797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PBWs</td>
<td>97 097</td>
<td>150 000</td>
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<td>29 000</td>
<td>33 700</td>
<td>19 776</td>
<td>16 998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretakers</td>
<td></td>
<td>32 954</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>5 585</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>2 700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst the initial RRF response planning figures remain close to the number of severely food insecure persons now considered in need of assistance, these are currently being updated to reflect new needs. For instance, the planning figures for TFA operations in Mauritania and Burkina Faso in particular should more or less double to match the actual number of severely food insecure persons requiring assistance. In terms of additional needs, 310,000 persons in The Gambia were recently assessed as requiring emergency assistance.

Time is very short for the mobilisation of extra funding to cover the current shortfall. The WFP shortfall is currently estimated at 290 MUSD for the vital months of May to September to cover the costs for 159,000 MT of food, 55 MUSD for cash and voucher transfers and 8,320 MT of supplementary foods for the treatment of nutrition. The additional needs in the Gambia of around 10 MUSD and the additional requirements to cover the needs for the expected increase in the number of beneficiaries in Mauritania, Mali and Burkina Faso, are not included in this figure.

**Burkina Faso**

Prices have continued to rise in most parts of the country, putting a large part of the population in continued difficulties. In order to face an expected increase in SAM admissions, UNICEF has stepped-up the supply of Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods for programmes implementing Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM). A nation-wide pro-active screening campaign at district level started on 27 April.
WFP is in the process of preparing the roll-out of a Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP) which is scheduled to start early May, including the selection of implementing partners and the prepositioning of the required Ready to Use Supplementary Foods (RUSF) that will be distributed. The BSFP is targeting on children under the age of 2 and pregnant and breastfeeding women in areas most affected by severely food insecurity as well as high Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates. Targeted Food Assistance (TFA) and Cash for Work (CFW) activities will also be provided to severely food insecure households living in the areas where a BSFP is planned. An Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) is currently being finalised to confirm the exact number of intended beneficiaries.

In the Northern Sahel region, the influx of refugees from northern Mali has now reached 70,000 including some refugees from areas more in southern Mali. This situation is making even more difficult the already precarious situation of local residents and is creating tensions in two large areas around Djibo and Deou. UNHCR's planning figure of 60,000 refugees by the end of June is in the process of being revised upward. WFP is preparing a new emergency operation (EMOP) to respond to the influx. OCHA is coordinating a joint food and refugee Emergency Humanitarian Appeal Process which should be launched in the coming days.

Chad

Poor households across the Sahel band are facing reduced availability of locally produced cereals and reduced access due to high and rising food prices. Despite the arrival of off-season crops on local markets, in March the trend of rising prices continued for both millet and sorghum. Of note, while food producing areas in the South were not much affected by rising prices in 2010, the previous crisis year, millet prices on Moundou market are 41.7% higher than the 5-year average.

In Mao, millet prices in Mao are 42% higher than at the same time last year and 31% higher than the 5-year average. In general, the increase in March 2012 is sharper than that in March 2010. While the price of livestock has slightly improved in most markets except Ati and Mongo, terms of trade remain unfavourable to herders.

The increase in new SAM admissions to nutrition treatment programmes continued in March and numbers are far exceeding the statistics of previous years. This is due to the scale-up of existing nutrition programmes, the opening of new emergency nutritional programmes are previously
poorly covered regions such as Wadi Fira, Batha, Guéra, Lac and Hadjer Lamis as well as the severity of the crisis.

Recent household economy surveys carried out by Oxfam and ACF projected a deterioration of livelihoods and survival prospects for the poorest households in Guéra and Barh el Ghazal regions, reaching IPC phases 3 to 4. Preparations are underway with registration, screening and referral activities ongoing to launch large scale food and supplementary feeding distributions throughout the sahelian regions, reaching an expected 1.2 million people until the next harvest.

Mali

The number of internally displaced has risen to an estimated 200,000 persons (WFP/HCR) whilst the number of Malian refugees in Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Algeria has reached 190,000 persons due to the conflict in the North. There are reports of serious human rights violations and protection issues regarding civilians, in particular women and children. The current lack of access for humanitarian aid to those in need in northern Mali is of very great concern.

The political and security situation in Bamako meanwhile remains fragile. The capital was rocked by a new spate of fighting targeting the military coup leadership on 30 April. This complex situation is restricting the working space of humanitarian agencies affecting their capacity to plan and implement humanitarian operations on the scale needed.

As is the case for Burkina Faso and Mauritania, the UN is updating its national appeal and estimated requirements which so far stand at 119 MUSD of which 40% has been funded (as of 13 April).

The northern part of Mali was already seriously affected by the food and nutrition crisis in Mali before the current surge in violence. The conflict and fragile political situation have therefore heightened the needs and risks, within Mali as well as for the populations in neighbouring countries such as Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Niger. Mali is the country in the region where food prices have risen to the highest levels in some locations, rendering access to food even more difficult for the population. Market monitoring remains difficult in the North due to insecurity but some initial information indicates further increase of cereals prices, of up to 300% in Gao (OCHA).

Nutrition and health interventions in areas affected by the conflict are taking place on an ad hoc and pragmatic basis in strict adherence to humanitarian principles and operational modalities, in a limited geographical area (notably in the main towns such as Tombouctou, Gao, Ménaka and
Kidal) and at a small scale so far due to constraints in access. In many areas of southern Mali, the scale-up of interventions to address emergency needs that had been already identified, in particular to reach an increased number of children < 5 with SAM to be screened and treated, is taking form thanks to the increase of current capacities and the deployment of new aid organisations. Data in terms of treatment and performance are however missing and the nutrition cluster is looking at providing some support in information management to the Regional Health Authorities. A matrix identifying priority areas (based on various criteria such as GAM and SAM rates, SAP evaluation, IDPs location, cholera risk) has been defined by the cluster and is now used to orientate priorities. Training on Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) is due to start in the various regions in order to strengthen technical capacity.

WFP has started targeted food/cash distribution in Kayes and Koulikoro for a total of 233,400 beneficiaries. Distributions in Segou, Sikasso and Mopti regions are planned to start in May. Preparation and screening for the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP) has also started for distributions to be started beginning of May in Kayes and Koulikoro.

Mauritania

The combined food assistance, in-kind food distributions and cash transfer activities, by humanitarian agencies in Mauritania so far is planned to reach over 271,000 persons or a little under 10% of the population. Most of these activities still have to start whilst the hungry season is already well-underway. Many of the planned conditional food assistance activities such as support to village Cereal Banks are still experiencing important shortfalls, with the exception of the voucher schemes and solidarity shops put in place by the Government.

Some NGO’s have started cash transfer programmes, such as INTERMON in the Brakna and Gorgol regions, targeting 15,000 people. ACF distributed two rounds of cash transfers to 1,495 households up to end of March in the Gorgol region. A third round is planned as well as an expansion of the response to Guidimakha region. WFP meanwhile increased its target population for cash transfer in urban areas with 15,000 persons to a total of 55,000 persons and with 20,000 persons to a total of 75,000 persons for in-kind food assistance as well as cash-transfers in rural areas. It also plans to include 58,000 Malian refugees and 30,000 members of the host population in the East of Mauritania in its food-assistance response programme.

The funding of the care for severe acutely malnourished children (SAM) under the age of 5 has been adequately secured, yet the challenges to actually find, screen and treat children with SAM in the vast country-side of Mauritania are high. To that effect, the coordination of the response and the monitoring of its roll-out and actual impact need to be boosted rapidly.

The number of refugees from Mali is now over 62,000 persons. They are located in one of the area (Hodh El Chargui) that is worst affected by food insecurity and to which access is complicated due to long distances and insecurity. The Mali conflict and the arrivals of refugees have aggravated the food insecurity of the most vulnerable populations in Mauritania.

Niger

The revised Consolidated Appeal for Niger now puts the estimated overall response requirement at 451 MUD of which 144 MUSD or 32% reportedly resourced as of 26/04/2012. The food assistance component amounts to 276 MUSD and has a 214 MUSD or 78% shortfall. The nutrition needs are now estimated at 116 MUSD, of which 67 MUSD or 58% is financed so far according to UN OCHA’s Financial Tracking System.

A flash update by the Government of Niger’s Early Warning System (SAP) estimates the numbers of persons in a critical state of food insecurity at almost a million persons by the end of March. Lack of access to food due to very high prices (50% increase compared to last year),
unfavourable terms of trade of holders of small ruminants (65% decrease in value observed) and detrimental coping strategies are observed, such as the reduction of the number and quality of meals a day, the sale of livelihoods assets and migration of entire families.

The number of refugees from Mali is now over 40,000 persons and they are arriving in some of the regions in Niger most affected by drought and the food and nutrition crisis, Tillabéry, Tahoua and Agadez. Their arrival is putting an additional strain on the host population as well as on the emergency response capacity.

![Millet price comparison, 2011 – 2012, Niger](Source: Afrique Verte 09 April 2012)

An interesting example of a comprehensive report on the evolving crisis in Niger and of its impact on the population is the report on the joint mission from 20 to 28 March evaluating the food and nutrition situation in the Zinder region the Dispositif National of the Niger government and UN and INGO technical partners. The report confirms an increase in SAM admissions compared to last year. There is a reference to some positive indicators such as the contribution of good off-season gardening production to making some nutritious foods available and increasing people’s revenues as well as the slightly better off situation of communities that benefited from early mitigation actions this year.

However, the over-all situation is described as very worrying so early into the hungry period. It confirms for instance the important rise in cereal-prices, lowering terms of trade for small ruminants (mostly kept by poorer households), the lack of pasture and of boreholes and drying of ponds for watering livestock and high prices of fodder, limited clean water sources (many dysfunctional wells) and the increase in the cost of water a/o the time required to find it. The displacement of entire families from deficit areas is reported. There has been a large increase in the number of displaced persons in Zinder town (several times more compared to 2010).

**Nigeria**

The results of a rapid Household Economy Analysis done in the Northern State of Katsina in March show a marked deterioration compared to the reference situation of 2010, a crisis year. The "very poor" households are not meeting their most essential survival needs this year and are experiencing a high livelihoods protection-gap of 23%. In comparison, a Livelihoods Gap of 4% was recorded during the last crisis in 2010.

The "poor" category of households who may not experience a survival needs gap this year still have an important livelihoods-gap of 22% this year, compared to no negative impact on livelihoods in 2010. It should also be noted that the "very poor" category in Katsina alone are
estimated to make-up 47% of a population of 5.8 Million people or 2.7 Million persons. Very high prices for cereals, approximating prices in Niger and up 35% from last December, as well the steep rise in the price of petrol after the partial abolishment of the fuel subsidy by the Federal Government early January this year are likely immediate causes of this situation.

**Senegal**

Newly elected President Macky Sall has announced his intention to give the response to the food and nutrition crisis in Senegal as well as measures to reduce the very high prices of staple foods as the first of his government’s five priority actions when he was sworn-in.

UNICEF reports (23/04/12) that from a total population of children < 5 of 254,000 in Matam and Diourbel, over 89% (227,714) were screened from February to April. 9,576 cases of MAM were detected and supported at community level. 473 cases of SAM were identified and referred to health facilities. Only 146 were received in health facilities. These figures remains however low compared to projected numbers from the nutrition survey (estimated 4,930 cases of SAM for Diourbel and Matam).

They are likely explained by a host of factors, in particular the lack of exemption to pay health user fees as well as a lack of specific technical capacity. Specialist nutrition interventions are currently being developed by the French Red Cross, TDH, MSF, ACF and UNICEF to address these challenges in both regions. UNICEF is also preparing some additional support through the supply Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF) for treatment of SAM as well as associated nutritional and medical inputs as well as technical support.

WFP is planning to provide targeted food assistance for 800,000 beneficiaries in particular in the most affected central and southern parts of Senegal. It launched its first distribution in the department of Oussouye in the Casamance region last 28 April.

**The Gambia**

This year’s food crisis in the Sahel is also affecting the Gambia. Last year’s agriculture production dropped 62% on average compared to last year and up to 81% according to crop variety, the worst year on record since 1980. Only after the result of the CILSS’ December 2011 post-harvest assessment was known was a crisis declaration issued on 6 March 2012. Predominantly relying on rain fed agriculture and income from the main cash crop groundnut, last year’s crop failure has been catastrophic for the poorest households. Groundnut being a main revenue earner for the country’s economy, this year’s production failure is also having a national impact.

Of the 1,363,791 people touched by the crisis according to the UN, 310,000 persons living in the 19 most affected districts are considered severely food insecure, in need of immediate assistance. The UN has established a disaster management group under WFP leadership, with WFP (food distribution), FAO (seed and fertilizer) and UNICEF (nutrition) as main actors. The government response is led by the national Disaster agency NEDMA, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance.

3. **Civil Protection**

N/A

4. **Response**

The Government of Burkina Faso organised a first general assembly at the end of March in order to launch the second phase of the national response plan to the crisis. A dissemination of a
coordinated response planning, with clear overview of implementing partners, activities, locations and a month-by-month work-plan, was expected by mid-April and is still awaited.

EC:

![EC Funding mobilised in response to the 2012 Sahel Food and Nutrition Crisis to date (Source: DG ECHO)](chart)

US Government:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Burkina Faso</th>
<th>Chad</th>
<th>Mali</th>
<th>Mauritania</th>
<th>Niger</th>
<th>Senegal</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total - USD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>950,000</td>
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<td>1,613,887</td>
<td>11,694,248</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID FFP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total USAID</td>
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<td>48,582,635</td>
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<td>1,613,887</td>
<td>192,714,365</td>
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_Bilaterial:_

_EU Member States Contributions to the Countries of the West Africa Sahel Region in 2012 – Amounts in Euro _€_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Estonia</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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### EU Member States Contributions to the 2012 Sahel Crisis response as of 20 April 2012 (Source: EDRIS Brussels)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>COUNTRIES</th>
<th>France</th>
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<th>Luxembourg</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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### UN:

Reported contributions by donors compared to allocated amounts to the operations in the different countries in the West Africa Sahel region are being updated regularly whilst country CAP’s as well as Flash Appeals are in the process of being revised. The expected total funding requirements for the UN is expected to exceed 1 Billion USD for the Sahel 2012 crisis whilst the latest count of donor contributions stands at around 500 MUSD or at most 50%.

The Government of Nigeria authorised 30,000 MT of Sorghum for purchase by WFP. Main recipient countries will be Niger and Chad. WFP is further in the process of procuring an additional 18,000 MT of cereals from India. Both shipments have not yet been programmed to WFP operations and will be deducted from the shortfall reported above.

The gap is most important for Niger that faces a 100,900 MT shortfall against planned food commodities and a 43 MUSD gap for the Cash & Voucher response component for the critical period of May to September 2012. Where still feasible, cash based operations should be supported as a preference considering their large timing and cost-effectiveness advantages.

A shortfall of 62% or 74.7 MUSD against planned requirements is reported by UNICEF as of the 18th of April. UNICEF expects to revise its Humanitarian Action Update by June this year.

### Civil Protection

N/A

### 5. Overall Recommendation / Action

- Further urgent action is required to mobilise extra funding resources to meet the needs already assessed for immediate action to mitigate and respond to the growing food and nutrition crisis.
- An up-scaling in the number of experience humanitarian staff on the ground is required.
- More emphasis needs to be given to cash transfers to strengthen the autonomy and restore dignity to the beneficiaries and provide liquidity to local markets to encourage traders to make food available.
- The pipelines for food commodities, especially specialised products for the treatment of moderate and severe malnutrition, need to be guaranteed.
- There is only a short window of opportunity to pre-position commodities in time to avoid major population displacement and suffering.