

Programme Activities and Achievements in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Strengthening Food Security Early Warning Systems

Until recently, there were no food security related baselines and functioning information systems in the DRC. In order to help bridge this gap, FAO's Emergency Coordination Unit has been supporting a project aimed at creating a food security early warning system based on sentinel sites. The EC-FAO Programme has been:

- providing methodological support in designing the EWS system;
- providing resources to extend the coverage of the system to all territories of the DRC; and
- strengthening government capacity at provincial and central levels.

The food security EWS is currently operational and analyses will soon be available on a regular basis.

Launching the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

The IPC is a tool for classifying the severity of food insecurity through a transparent and rigorous process of consensus building among all key food security stakeholders. In the DRC, the following institutions have collaborated in launching the IPC initiative: FAO, the National Service for Agricultural Statistics, and the Provincial Inspectorates for Agriculture. Partners include UN Agencies such as UNICEF and WFP, international NGOs such as Oxfam GB and Action Contre la Faim, and national NGOs.

IPC working groups have been formed at national and provincial levels. These working groups produced the first IPC map of the DRC in July 2008. The IPC maps will be used by decision makers to better target and allocate food security investments.

Innovative Nutrition Tools for Rapid Assessments

In March 2008, FAO nutritionists provided technical assistance aimed at strengthening the Early Warning Systems system by integrating the key dimensions of food security. The Household Dietary Diversity Score (DDS) and the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) were included in the system. These tools aim at monitoring dietary diversity and food access at the household level. They are useful for quickly assessing deteriorating food security situations.

Research on Food Security in Protracted Crisis

Protracted Crisis situations – such as those in the DRC – suffer from a lack of information and frameworks for better understanding longer term causes and guiding appropriate response. The EC-FAO Programme has therefore funded in-depth research on how longer term programming might be incorporated into the short term responses that are the norm in crisis situations.

The DRC case studies, plus a series of lessons learned and recommendations on what might concretely be done in similar situations, have been included in a book called "Beyond Relief: Food Security in Protracted Crises" published by FAO and Practical Action Publishing in September 2008. The book was successfully launched at the Overseas Development Institute in the UK and covered in the International Press. See Reuters:

<http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/12218221760.htm>

Statistics in Applied Climatology (SIAC) Training Course

Four participants from the DRC participated in the Statistics in Applied Climatology (SIAC) training course. This three month course, run online by the University of Reading, gives people working with climatic data the skills they need to use historical datasets effectively.

As weather is a crucial factor in food production, the training ensured that technical staff will be able to produce relevant outputs that will be integrated into other initiatives such as the IPC and Sentinel post EWS. The resulting analysis will help users make better decisions regarding food security and agriculture.

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For more information see: http://www.foodsec.org/con_ac.htm



Using the nutrition tools to find out about villagers' food consumption and dietary diversity. The data collected will be used in the national food security early warning system.