



## **El Niño Response in the Dry Corridor of Central America (PRO-ACT) EU-WFP**

March - April 2017 Update to EU Delegation



**World Food Programme**



Created 23/05/2017

**Legend**

- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Main cities
- Water body
- Departmental boundary

Source: Drought periods 2000-2001, CEPREDENAC, 2001; Climate Risk Index from CIAT, 1999. Prepared by World Food Programme, May 2017.

The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations



Prepared by the VAM unit of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Food Programme.

## Dry Corridor of Central America

Four years of drought and below average rainfall in the Dry Corridor of Central America has generated significant losses in income and agricultural production, particularly for subsistence farmers and day laborers in **Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras**.

Deforestation, erosion and poor agricultural practices are reducing agricultural production and increasing rural poverty. **Worsening food security**, reduction of incomes and lack of employment opportunities push people to migrate inside and outside of the country seeking new means of sustenance.

Farmers that rely on rain-fed agriculture are the most vulnerable to drought and to recurrent extreme weather events, such as the ongoing **El Niño** phenomenon disturbing rainfall patterns.

### Food Security Context

The main growing season (May-August) is often the most difficult time of the year for the rural communities: families have limited possibilities to gather and buy sufficient food. The recent rainfall forecast for May and June is expected to be below-average in parts of the Dry Corridor. Of particular concern are parts of Honduras and Nicaragua.

The latest WFP Emergency Food Security Assessments in Central America showed that around 1.8 million people were moderately to severely food insecure. Given the performance of the *postrera*<sup>2</sup> season and the forecasts for the coming *primera*<sup>1</sup>, the situation is

expected to deteriorate again, negatively affecting the resilience and production capacity of the population in the Dry Corridor. Decreased food security is often linked to emigration and population are increasingly relying on irreversible emergency coping strategies, such as selling land, further limiting their resilience against future shocks.

In Honduras, the Government has raised concerns on the unfavorable climate forecast, particularly for southern parts, and may declare a state of emergency based on the estimated impact of the drought, and appeal to the international community for assistance. In Guatemala, the Government has prepared a Seasonal Hunger Plan to assist the most-affected municipalities in the Dry Corridor. The Government has asked for WFP to provide urgent assistance.

### World Food Programme's Response

Funded by the European Union, the World Food Programme supports vulnerable populations in the Dry Corridor of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to adapt to the impact of drought and improve livelihoods of the families and communities through the creation of income and assets. In Nicaragua, WFP supports farmer cooperatives and the national school meals programme. More than 70,000 people are supported through this regional project.

<sup>1</sup> *Primera* is the first and main crop cycle generally between April and September.

<sup>2</sup> *Postrera* is the second crop cycle generally between September and February.

## March—April 2017 Update

### Food Security Analysis and Monitoring

**The Integrated Context Analysis (ICA)** in Honduras was conducted and the final report is under preparation. The ICA combines historical trends of food security, nutrition, and shocks with information on land degradation, population, markets etc. and therefore facilitates the identification of priority areas of intervention and appropriate programme strategies. The ICA is complemented with seasonal livelihood consultations with partners, as well as with community-level participatory planning exercises to ensure prioritization and ownership of project activities in local level.

**Baseline data** for project monitoring was collected at the end of April in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Data analysis of the results has commenced.

### Project Participants and Partners

**Selection of project participants** was completed in March. Consequently, communities were consulted and informed of the selection process and on the project activity schedule. Organization of the community committees and their orientation started.

**Data entry on project participants** into WFP's corporate beneficiary registration system (SCOPE) initiated in Guatemala and El Salvador. Digitalizing project participant information to SCOPE improves the accuracy and efficiency of management of the assistance.

**Partners** to conduct activities were selected and partnership agreements were finalized. In addition to government counterparts, partners for WFP are:

El Salvador: Community Social Development Associations (ADESCO)

Guatemala: Action Against Hunger – Spain

Honduras: Development Association of El Triunfo (ADETRIUNF); Association of Ecological Committees of Southern Honduras (ACESH); Commonwealth of Lenca Municipalities of the Sierra de la Paz (MAMLESIP)

Nicaragua: Farmer cooperatives

**Financial Service Providers were selected** and preparations for cash distribution started. WFP distributes cash to project participants so that families can purchase food from the local markets. WFP Honduras conducted the first cash distribution during the last week of April. The subsequent distributions will be during the lean season (May-August). WFP Nicaragua is planning to provide two months of school meals during the same period, still pending government request.

### Implementation

**Procurement** of items needed for the water and soil conservation works is ongoing. These items include among others: agricultural tools, irrigation equipment, and fruit seedlings. WFP is also purchasing



maize and beans for the school meals in Nicaragua.

**Trainings** started and more than 70 sessions were conducted for close to 1,800 participants during March and April. The trainings covered topics on crop management, financial education, tree nursery establishment, water and soil conservation techniques and food security and nutrition. Exchanges of best practices between farmer organizations were also organized in Nicaragua. Following the trainings, equipment was handed to participants, such as backpack sprayers to women groups to improve yields; and packing, polisher and sealing machines to farmer organizations in Nicaragua.

**Works** on water and soil conservation in the communities started in April. Works on household plots and communal areas included: establishment of nurseries, production of organic fertilizer, preparation of terraces and fruit orchards, and construction of chicken coops, among others.

**Coordination** with national and local level authorities continued. Standard operating procedures and data gathering tools were elaborated and validated with partners. Memorandum of Understanding between WFP and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador was signed serving as the framework for the project in the country.

**Missions** from the WFP Regional Bureau to Country Offices of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua were conducted to provide guidance and support on programmatic issues and on resource management.



## Visibility

The **EU Ambassador** in Managua conducted a field visit to project sites in Nicaragua in March. The visit was documented in a press release and [social media](#).

**Visibility** items (shirts, bags, banners etc.) were distributed to project participants and partner staff.

