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Stabilization of post-conflict areas in DRC — joint WFP-FAO resilience building

Since 2009, WFP has worked together with FAO to strengthen the resilience of communities in fragile states by reviving agricultural production and commodity markets that have been damaged by years of armed conflict.

The pilot phase started in Kabalo in Tanganyika province and Bikoro and Ingende in Equateur province, before expanding its geographical coverage to North and South Kivu, and eventually to North and South Ubangi. The initial Belgian and Swedish funding in DRC, followed by multi-year grants from Canada and Germany, have allowed the expansion of the initiative to new zones.

Currently, the joint WFP-FAO resilience programme in DRC targets 103,500 households in the provinces of Tanganyika, North Kivu, South Kivu, North Ubangi and South Ubangi.

The resilience programme in DRC follows an approach based on the triple nexus (humanitarian - development - peace) promoting links between humanitarian action, recovery, and development, laying the foundation for achieving sustainable results.

BMZ PROJECT

WFP and FAO, in close collaboration with the Congolese provincial technical services, have successfully implemented the stabilization project of priority post-conflict areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo titled, *“Transitional development through agricultural value chains, and livelihood recovery and diversification”*, generously financed by the **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** through the **German Development Bank (KfW)** with a multi-year fund of EUR 35 million.

The project covers the provinces of South and North Kivu, including 30,000 smallholder farmer households, representing 150,000 beneficiaries equally distributed between the two provinces. This project, which runs from 2017 to 2021 is focused on long-term recovery and building the resilience of farm households, addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. FAO supports farmer organizations on food production and processing, while WFP focuses on commodity aggregation, post-harvest handling, commercialization and access to markets.



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Objective of the project is to strengthen food security and smallholder farmers' livelihoods to support peace and stabilization in the targeted area through:

- Increase in food production, processing and commercialisation of food commodities;
- Creation of community assets to enhance adaptive capacities and improve livelihoods;
- Income diversification to reduce vulnerability to

shocks and promotion of women's empowerment;

- Bridging short-term food deficits of returnees and vulnerable households by implementing social transfer schemes;
- Capacity development of community-based organizations for a sustainable management of community assets and services.

BACKGROUND

The DRC is one of the most fertile countries on earth, with the potential to feed all its inhabitants and even export food commodities. The country is home to approximately 80 million hectares of arable land – the second largest cultivable area in the world after Brazil – as well as approximately 50 percent of the continent's water resources with a potential fishing capacity of 707,000 metric tons of fish per annum.

Despite its vast natural resources, the DRC is home to one of the largest hunger crisis in the world. According to the findings of the 18th Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 21.8 million people in DRC are currently severely food insecure. Out of the 84 million inhabitants in DRC approximately 65 million live in rural areas. Out of these rural dwellers 72 percent live in poverty. The DRC continues to experience prolonged conflict – particularly in the east of the country – contributing to large-scale population displacements, disrupted agricultural activities and impeding access to markets, schools and healthcare.



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

◆ Capacity building of community organisations

Since early 2018, WFP and FAO, in collaboration with the Provincial Inspectorate of Rural Development (IDR) in North and South Kivu, assisted **582 Farmer Organisations (FOs)**, **60 Union Farmer Organisations (UFOs)** and **16 Cooperatives** to consolidate their legal status, improve their managerial structures and operational capacities helping to make them more resilient, inclusive, efficient and sustainable. As a result their production capacities, ability to access markets and serve their members has improved. Benefiting from **Farmer Field Schools**, and agricultural inputs (improved seeds and good quality tools), this project has also enabled smallholders to strengthen their capacities in terms of sustainable agricultural production and productivity in terms of quantity and quality.

◆ Peace building and reconciliation

In response to the multiple conflicts in the provinces of North and South Kivu due to ethnic tensions and problems of access to land, WFP and FAO placed particular emphasis on the implementation of activities to promote social cohesion. Through its participatory and territorial development approach, the joint project, creates and maintains a **dialogue between landowners and small producers in order to increase the area of land that can be cultivated**, secure

access to land and thus limit conflicts. Through collaboration with local authorities the project facilitated the **reduction of land renting cost by 25% in North Kivu and by 50% in South Kivu**.

◆ Women's empowerment

The project provides support to **500 Dimitra Clubs to carry out their respective activities**. Dimitra Clubs are informal groups of rural women, men and young people who discuss common challenges and take collective action to overcome them. One of their purposes is to strengthen the status of women, particularly by enhancing their role in the clubs' moderation committees and by improving women's access to productive resources. In addition, **7,000 women received functional literacy** that helped to build their self-confidence and to become more active in their communities, enabling some of them to take up management positions in their communities and farmer organizations as well as set up income generating activities.

◆ Nutrition

The project has organized nutrition-sensitive activities benefiting members of farmers' organizations and the larger community. These focused on the promotion of nutritionally rich crop varieties coupled with nutrition education. To this end **150 culinary demonstrations** were held in the community to encourage the use of affordable local foods with high nutritional value. In 2020, **300 vegetable gardens** were established with the **Cash For Assets approach benefitting 2,702 households** (representing 13,510 beneficiaries).

◆ Rehabilitation of community assets

The rehabilitation of **193 km of agricultural feeder roads by 8,221 members of farmer organizations**, 65% of whom were women (representing 41,105 beneficiaries) has helped linking remote rural areas to more densely populated areas, thereby contributing to market integration. The project has also supported reforestation of **163 hectares with the assistance of 1,343 individuals** to counter degradation of cultivable land and preserve natural resources.

◆ Post-harvest management

In order to support smallholder farmers to move from subsistence production to commercialisation over **20 agricultural complexes including warehouses, drying areas, agricultural input shops and processing units and 75 community granaries** have been constructed. These storage and processing units have enabled smallholder farmers to safely store their agricultural products in good condition and sell them at a later stage when market prices are more favourable.



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