



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

FAO LESOTHO COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

July - December 2016



This report compiles all information and communication activities undertaken by
FAO Lesotho from July to December 2016





Contents

I. Press articles	3
II. Press releases.....	7
III. Awareness raising and advocacy	14

I. Press articles

→ SA maize prices could fall in 2017

Published by The Post on 21 July 2016

→ Maize yield down by 61%: FAO

Published by the Informative Newspaper on 9 August 2016



→ Smart-climate agricy way forward

Published by Informative Newspaper on 12 August 2016

→ When it comes to its humanitarian work, FAO is in it for the long haul

Published by FAO HQ on 19 August 2016

Accessible via <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/429733/icode/>

An enduring commitment to sustainable agriculture and resilient communities

Celebrated every 19 August, World Humanitarian Day provides an annual reminder of the continuing need for collective action to alleviate suffering and want around the globe. It is also an occasion to honour the humanitarian workers and volunteers toiling on the frontlines of crises. Here, we reflect on FAO's activities in humanitarian situations and profile some of our team who are working in the field to build a world free from hunger.

A seed takes months to develop and grow before it yields its bounty, but conflict or natural disasters can — sometimes in a matter of seconds — wipe out an entire season's crop. And slow onset-crises like those associated with climate change sap fields and



livestock, taking a steady toll on plant and animal health and culminating in "slow-motion" harvest failures. Each year, millions of people who depend on the production, marketing and consumption of crops, livestock, fish, forests and other natural resources are confronted by a variety of disasters and crises that threaten either their food security, their livelihoods, or both. The repercussions can be felt at local, national and, at times, regional and global levels. When the worst happens and people find themselves unable to feed or shelter themselves, humanitarian responses that provide emergency food, water, health and shelter represent critical, life-saving interventions. However, the longer-term work that goes into helping communities build their resilience to such events, cope with them as they unfold, and recover once they subside, presents a unique set of challenges. These are the challenges that FAO and its partners are wrestling with each day in places like Afghanistan, Central America's Dry Corridor, Papua New Guinea, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. In 2016, 75 percent of the planet's poorest, most vulnerable people remain reliant on agriculture as their primary source of food and income. Yet agricultural development, farming, livestock rearing are activities that require a considerable time investment. They are highly vulnerable to the vagaries of the weather, and perform best in times of peace. Planting and tending crops is hard work and can be a challenge just on its own — it is infinitely more difficult in conflict zones, or when extended droughts mean that the rains on which crops and animals depend, simply never come.

Understanding FAO's humanitarian work

FAO plays a unique role in responding to crises affecting food production and rural communities. From day one, we work to protect and restore the livelihoods of affected farmers, fishers, herders and foresters. In doing so, our resilience building efforts not only save livelihoods, but also help communities lay the foundations for long-term recovery. Well after the TV crews and headlines have moved on, FAO remains engaged in the field, working with farmers and rural communities to build strong, productive, and resilient rural livelihoods. This includes diverse activities such as, for example: monitoring food security trends to allow for early action; supporting food production, even as conflicts are ongoing, and helping countries and communities resume food production after they subside; and preventing pastoralist conflicts or facilitating land conflict resolutions.

Rising needs and the role of agriculture

Currently, as a result of conflict and disaster, more than 130 million people around the world need humanitarian assistance to survive. Together, they would form the tenth most populous country on Earth. Meanwhile, [recent analysis](#) by FAO and the World Food Programme found that protracted conflicts affecting 17 countries have driven over 56 million people into either "crisis" or "emergency" levels of food insecurity. Another [FAO study](#) has shown that droughts, floods, storms and other disasters triggered by climate change are having a large and increasing impact on agriculture in the developing world. "Let's not forget that underneath these staggering statistics are real lives and real people," says Daniele Donati, Deputy-Director of FAO's Emergency Response Division. "Agriculture can and must be an integral part of humanitarian responses aimed at preventing the dire and complex food security situations around the world from getting worse; it cannot be an afterthought," according to Donati. "What's more, sustainable agriculture can be more than just a buffer — it can be the bedrock of peace and resilience," he adds.

Learn more about FAO's work in humanitarian situations directly from our staff in the field via this series of short Q&As:

[BORJA MIGUELEZ](#) has worked in humanitarian contexts in Africa, Asia and Latin America for the last 16 years, and has been FAO's Emergency Coordinator in Lesotho since 2012.

[GEORGE MVULA](#) is from Malawi and has been working for FAO for 12 years in a number of challenging contexts, including in Somalia, South Sudan and the Gambia.

Stories accessible via

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/how-we-work/world-humanitarian-day-2016-staff-profiles/borja-lesotho/en/>

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/how-we-work/world-humanitarian-day-2016-staff-profiles/george-lesotho/en/>

→ **Call to combat climate change in Lesotho**

Published by Informative Newspaper on 20th September 2016. Available at:

http://www.informativenews.co.ls/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1691:call-to-combat-climate-change-in-lesotho&catid=10&Itemid=121

Call to combat climate change in Lesotho



MASERU-If we do not stop climate change, agricultural production in the world may fall by as much as 2 percent each decade by the end of this century as a consequence of rising temperatures.

This was said by Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) representative in Lesotho, Yves Klompenhouwer at the European Union (EU) Delegation Climate Change Awareness Day held in Maseru last week.

The day brought together a wide range of stakeholders for a climate dialogue that highlighted the importance of increasing the range and number of actions targeting climate change in Lesotho.

Climate is defined as the average prevailing weather conditions over a specific geographical area recorded over a long period of time, usually exceeding 30 years. The elements of weather that are usually taken into account in defining an area's climate include rainfall, temperature, sunshine records, frost occurrence, wind and evaporation.

"Climate Change is a global challenge, impacting everyone, but those most affected are the poor and the hungry who gradually lose assets and possibilities to sustain themselves," said Klompenhouwer.

"Sadly, we have been witnesses in Lesotho of the progressive deterioration of agricultural production, as rains nowadays come later and dry spells are frequent.

The FAO representative said there is no doubt that greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change continue to rise.

"As a result, we see changing weather patterns, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events. Therefore all the countries in the world including Lesotho agreed, when adopting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts," he added.

The strong commitment of the international community to combat climate change is also demonstrated by the likely ratification of the Paris Climate Change Agreement signed in France last year.

"We therefore need to move towards climate-smart agriculture to sustainably increase agricultural productivity and incomes, to adopt and build resilience to climate change as well as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," he said.

He further said Lesotho is high vulnerable to climate challenges. "It depends on rained Agriculture for food production and has a large poor rural population engaged in subsistence farming," he said.

Meanwhile, EU Ambassador to Lesotho Dr Michael Doyle said he recalled as "very successful" the outcome the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015, when some 195 countries including Lesotho, adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal.

"This is a true demonstration that climate change is a global challenge calling for a global response, and that multilateralism can still deliver big results, it marked a fundamental pivot.

"Climate change affects us all and there is nowhere to hide from it. It is a global problem which requires global solution," he said.

Doyle told participants that the EU Delegation, with funding from the Government of Ireland, had mobilised a team of climate change experts to support the Ministry of Energy and Meteorology and the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) in formulating a Climate Change Response Plan for Lesotho.

"The experts will advise on the policies, institutional framework and strategies needed to reverse environmental degradation and adapt to climate change. Assistance will also be provided for the formulation of a national sustainable energy strategy.

"This expert support to Lesotho is part of the European Union's commitment to support partner countries in their implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' (INDCs)," said the Ambassador.

LMS representative Malehloa Jockey said Climate is influenced by a number of natural factors amongst which are latitude, continental or maritime location of an area, altitude, and topography.

"However, whilst the world's climate has always varied naturally, there is pool of evidence which shows that rising concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the earth's atmosphere that have resulted from human activity over the last two centuries are overriding this natural variability, leading to irreversible climate change," she said.

→ EU increases support for food insecure Basotho

Published by the Lesotho Times Newspaper on 24 September 2016



Staff Reporter

THE European Union has increased its support for Basotho most affected by the El Nino-induced drought to 5.5 million euros (approximately M 88 million).

This was revealed this week by European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides who said the support was provided under the EU's humanitarian aid budget.

In a statement, the EU said the new support "represents new EU funding of 3.5 million euros on top of the 2 million euros in humanitarian aid that the EU already mobilised in March 2016, following the appeal of the Government of Lesotho for international support to respond to the impact of the drought on the population."

The statement also quoted Commissioner Stylianides as saying that "this substantial increase in the EU funding provided in response to the drought in Lesotho will allow the EU and our three implementing partners to extend into the first half of 2017 the vital humanitarian aid provided to the most vulnerable".

The EU further stated that two of its funded projects already under implementation by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) were receiving top-up funding bringing the total amounts allocated to 2 million euros for WFP and 1.5 million euros for FAO.

"In addition, an amount of 2 million euros has been allocated to a new EU supported drought relief project to be implemented by Action Aid.

The project undertaken through WFP was already providing unconditional food assistance for vulnerable families through targeted cash transfers," the EU said.

The EU also said the FAO implemented project was providing vulnerable households with complementary support such as training and kits for home gardening and nutrition, as well as food production packages and associated training on integrated sustainable farming practices.

The EU further stated that the new project to be implemented by Action Aid would also address short to medium term food security needs of vulnerable drought affected households.

The statement also quoted European Union Ambassador Michael Doyle as saying that "the EU's provision of additional humanitarian aid funding to support vulnerable Basotho most affected by the current drought is in keeping with the commitment given by the EU at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 to support countries most affected by the current food security crisis caused by El Nino".

The El Nino weather phenomenon ravaged southern Africa last year causing a drought which left millions of people in desperate need of food aid while livestock also perished due to lack of drinking water and reduced pastures.

→ EU avails M88m to counter drought

Published by Informative Newspaper on 27th September 2016. Available at:

http://www.informativnews.co.ls/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1748:eu-avails-m88m-to-counter-drought&catid=10&Itemid=121

EU avails M88m to counter drought



MASERU. The European Union (EU) has increased to M88 million (€5.5m) as the support provided under the EU's humanitarian aid budget for Basotho who are most affected by the severe drought.

This was announced by the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides in a press release issued by the EU last week.

The press release states that this represents new EU funding of €3.5m on top of the €2m in humanitarian aid that the EU already mobilised in March 2016, following the appeal of the government of Lesotho for international support to respond to the impact of the drought on the population.

Commissioner Stylianides said this substantial increase in the EU funding provided in response to the drought in Lesotho will allow the EU and their other three implementing partners to extend into the first half of 2017 the vital humanitarian aid provided to the most vulnerable.

"The two EU funded projects already under implementation by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) are getting top-up funding, bringing the total amounts allocated to €2m for WFP and €1.5m for FAO," it reads.

In addition, the press release states that an amount of €2m has been allocated to a new EU supported drought relief project to be implemented by Action Aid.

It reads: "The project undertaken through WFP is already providing unconditional food assistance for vulnerable families through targeted cash transfers.

EU Ambassador, Dr Michael Doyle, said the EU's provision of additional humanitarian aid funding to support vulnerable Basotho most affected by the current drought is in keeping with the commitment given by the EU at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 to support countries most affected by the current food security crisis caused by El Niño.

"In April 2016, the EU announced additional emergency humanitarian aid support for Southern Africa as one of the regions most affected by El Niño.

"The severity of the El Niño-induced drought prompted the increase in funding for projects in Lesotho as a response to the continuing food insecurity affecting vulnerable Basotho most affected by the drought.

"The increase in aid will continue to help meet the urgent needs of this population," said the Ambassador.

FAO is helping farmers in Lesotho to cope with the severe impact of El Niño by providing an accurate picture of the seed security situation in the agricultural regions of the country upon which more effective decisions can be made for an adequate response.

→ Community co-operations essential

Published by Public Eye on 27 October 2016.

→ Cash grants help Lesotho's poorest

Published by Mail & Guardian on 11 November 2016

Mail Guardian
 NEWS OPINION ARTS BUSINESS EDUCATION HEALTH SPECIAL REPORTS MORE PARTNERS
 Advertiser
 SPECIAL REPORTS
Cash grants help Lesotho's poorest
 Dorees Davie 11 Nov 2016 00:30

"My keyhole garden helps me to grow my veggie seedlings faster," says Matuetsi Foketsane (64) with her grandson Reale (1). (Photo: Dorees Davie)

Matuetsi Foketsane has lost her own three children but takes care of her three grandchildren. Her village, in the Mafabeng area district is half an hour from Lesotho's capital Maseru. It is a town with extremely high levels of unemployment and poverty, and her situation is by no means unique. However, she receives a grant that helps her food and her school uniforms for the children.

Matuetsi's household benefits from the Lesotho Child Grant Programme (CGP), an unconditional programme that is now delivering a pre-tertiary quarterly cash transfer with education and health benefits to 26,000 households across the mountain kingdom, reaching about 80,000 children below the age of 18. Over 250,000 Basotho mothers are enrolled – almost 20% of the population – of whom 120,000 are considered to be vulnerable, and many of whom are cared for by older siblings or ailing grandparents.

The CGP is run by the ministry of social development, with financial support from the European Union (EU) and technical support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The EU and UNICEF accept full responsibility for the rollout of the programme in 2015.

The grants vary in size between 360 and 750 Mafabeng (1 Lel = 1 Rand), depending on the number of children per household. The money only covers a fraction of each family's needs, but it does help to cover the hidden costs of education such as school uniforms, shoes and transport, and provides a measure of stability to those living on or below the poverty line.

Beneficiaries are selected through a complex process of community-organisation and a National Information System of Social Assistance (Nissa) has been developed as a database that sorts households according to their levels of poverty. This has helped to inform targeting of beneficiaries, as well as managing and monitor other social protection programmes.

The El Niño weather phenomenon of 2015 caused an unprecedented drought in Lesotho that affected about a third of the population, and brought the maize crop production down by 89% in comparison to the previous agricultural cycles. Successful crop failures have brought poverty to almost 80% of the Basotho. In response to this crisis, which has been declared a state of emergency by the Lesotho government, cash top-ups were included in the CGP, which brought further relief to 250,000 ultra-poor households such as Matuetsi's.

The long-term objective of the CGP is to improve the living standards of orphans and vulnerable children to reduce malnutrition, improve their health and increase school enrolment.

Several projects have also been implemented to bolster the CGP. One of these is run by the Catholic Relief Services in Mafabeng. One a grant here led to the area, we visited a savings scheme group meeting administered by the project, which helps child grant recipients to invest their savings productively. Members of this group from Mafabeng reported making substantial savings, and in times of need, cash can be borrowed from such groups at reasonable rates, instead of the exorbitant rates offered by moneylenders.

Another community development initiative is nutrition groups, where among others, infants are weighed and measured to determine their nutritional status. If a baby is below weight, it is referred to and taken to a local clinic.

Lesotho is an agrarian society: 50% of the rural population relies on farming as their main livelihood source, of which 90% of subsistence farmers, and up to 80% of the population engage in some form of agricultural activity. Even in Maseru's suburbs, small plots of neatly tended vegetable and fruit trees are ubiquitous. In this context the FAO, after conducting pilot projects, decided to help improve gardening techniques as a complement to the CGP.

A 26 gardening kit comprising six varieties of vegetable seeds, a shade net and training materials has been distributed to thousands of households so far, and these are used to build so-called "keyhole gardens". The name keyhole garden is derived from its shape. It is a round, raised garden supported by stones that is filled with compost and soil and has an efficient irrigation system to help save water.

As with the caring for children, most farming activities are carried out by women. "My keyhole garden helps me to grow my veggie seedlings faster, and then I transfer them to other parts of my garden," says sixty-four-year old Matuetsi Foketsane. The raised garden also conveniently allows her to weed without bending down. The garden is watered with grey water used for washing up; after tending to her crops, she washed her hands carefully from a bottle hanging from a tree, which prevents the transfer of bacteria living in the soil.

The CGP is not without its flaws. Matuetsi's Nkhosi (20) of Mafabeng village grows her own food, but said she struggles to feed her children due to her crop production being hampered by the present lack of water. Exclusion is one of the issues the programme is working on, said UNICEF Lesotho's Mooko Thaeane Ramasole, although families must exit the programme when children turn 18, so gaps are continually created for new beneficiaries.

Another problem is indexing the grant to increasing prices, but the biggest problem the CGP has at the moment is getting cash to beneficiaries in remote locations. "Cash delivery is very expensive," said Ramasole, "and the mobile payment system experiences a big influx on payment days, so the system sometimes gets swamped."

Nevertheless, the programme has been subject to evaluations since 2011, which revealed that it has had a broad array of positive impacts. Due to programme messaging that the CGP funds should be used in the interests of children, there was a large increase in expenditures on schooling, school uniforms and school shoes.

There was also a 37% increase in birth registration, an anticipated effect of the programme, as there is a requirement for beneficiary children to have a birth certificate with six months of enrolment into the programme. There was also a slight reduction in illnesses such as colds or flu, possibly as a result of households buying more clothing and footwear for children, and an increase in school enrolments and children staying in school.

The CGP improved the ability of beneficiary households to access food throughout the year, though effects on food consumption and dietary diversity were mainly concentrated around pay dates.

Families receiving grants were more likely to provide support to other members of the community and less likely to receive support from other family members. Spending the grant money in the area where they live has a positive impact on the local economy, for instance on families who own local businesses.

The CGP is not a lot in terms of hard cash, but for those living on or below the breadline, in a land hit hard by drought and disease, any help is welcomed. Members of the Mafabeng Community Council, whom we met to ask permission before visiting the villages, said the grant is "very helpful for our children" and asked that "they continue to receive the grants, so they can wear school uniforms and shoes, and have food".

000030 2016-11-11 00:00:00

Let's resolve MNC's start-up vision
 000030 2016-11-04 00:00:00



II. Press releases

The following press releases were produced by FAO Lesotho and sent to all media in Lesotho and FAO regional and headquarters offices during the reporting period.

→ **Lesotho: Strengthening response to El Niño drought effects.**

Improving extension capacities to mobilize and guide affected communities crucial.

Maseru, 08 August 2016 – The current humanitarian crisis faced by Lesotho population and generated by the 2015 El Niño phenomenon has had an unprecedented impact on agriculture. Maize crop production decreased by 61 percent compared to the previous agricultural year and a total number of 679 000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance according to the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee report*.

In response to the crisis, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) to bring material support and capacity development to affected farmers. As part of its Emergency Programme and to improve the impact of its response, FAO and MAFS have conducted training sessions for MAFS extension staff that completed in July 2016.

"Effectively reaching rural communities is essential to achieve lasting changes in agricultural practices," explains Yves Klompenhouwer, FAO Representative in Lesotho. "As weather patterns are becoming less predictable and irregular, training communities on Climate Smart Agriculture practices such as Conservation Agriculture and improved Home Gardening and Nutrition becomes a priority to adapt and mitigate the impact of Climate Change and meteorological hazards increasing the resilience of Basotho."

MAFS with support from FAO developed the capacities of 245 agricultural extension staff in various disciplines including; community mobilization, community organization, group dynamics and conflict management.

Participants also received a refresher training on Conservation Agriculture and Home Gardening and Nutrition**, topics that have been rolled out since 2012.

The Emergency Response Plan developed by FAO for the period 2016-2017 has an initial budget of USD 11 million. This plan builds on the gains accrued from previous emergency recovery activities (2012-2015)** and responds to the current drought emergency focusing on the most vulnerable households while strengthening national capacities.

The European Commission - Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Netherlands Government, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of the United Nations and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), have so far funded the activities.

*Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee – Publication May 2016

**[All training materials on Home Gardening and Nutrition are available for download at the following here.](#)

→ **European Union provides additional Euro 500,000 (LSL 7m) to FAO/GOL emergency response to the drought**

This additional funding allows to reach over 10,000 families under the emergency programme implemented by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Ministry of Social Development

Maseru, 12 August 2016 – At the start of the new agricultural season, Lesotho is still suffering from the consequences of the 2015 drought. One third of its population is considered food insecure and this situation is likely to last until the 2017 harvest.

In response to the El Niño induced drought, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) has donated a total of Euro 1.5m to fund the Emergency Response Plan implemented by FAO and the Government of Lesotho.

Given the severity of the El Niño induced drought, the initial funding donated by ECHO was increased by Euro 500,000 at the end of July.

ECHO funds will assist 6,000 families enrolled in the Government funded “Child Grant Programme (CGP)” in receiving a home gardening and nutrition kit including vegetable seeds, shade net and training materials.

Furthermore, ECHO funds will also assist over 4,000 vulnerable farming families in receiving a livelihood protection package consisting of agricultural inputs and training on Climate Smart Agriculture.

“Investing in the promotion of Climate Change adaptation measures from the early stages of the emergency response is critical to reduce future vulnerabilities among Basotho farmers”, said Yves Klompenhouwer, FAO Representative in Lesotho.

The Emergency Response Plan developed by FAO for the period 2016-2017 has an initial budget of USD 11 million. This plan builds on the gains accrued from previous emergency recovery activities (2012-2015)* and responds to the current drought emergency focusing on the most vulnerable households while strengthening national capacities. It is funded so far by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Netherlands Government, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of the United Nations and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

*All training materials on Home Gardening and Nutrition are available for download at the following link www.lesothocsa.com



Fig 1 - Posters 1 & 4 of the Home Gardening & Nutrition training material

FAO and MAFS support El Niño affected families through provision of inputs for 2016/2017 agricultural season

Maseru, 01 September 2016 – Lesotho was severely affected by the El Niño phenomenon that hit the Southern Africa region in 2015. Conclusions of the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Report published in May 2016 indicate that 680,000 people in Lesotho are food insecure at the moment and in need of urgent help until the 2017 harvest.

Through the Emergency Programme of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), 4,850 families (24,250 individuals) living in the mountain districts started receiving this week agricultural inputs for the 2016/2017 summer cropping season.

Additional 15,000 families will be assisted in Senqu Valley and lowland districts in September and October.

The inputs' distribution is made through agricultural resource centres with the help of MAFS extension staff, coordinated by the FAO emergency team.

Each beneficiary receives a staple food package made of 10kg maize seeds, 5 kg of bean seeds, 5 kg of peas seeds, 5 kg of grazing vetch seeds to plant as cover crops. They also receive a home gardening package comprising of a 300g-pack of six varieties of vegetable seeds together with a shade net (4x4m) and green house plastic (4x4m) to improve home gardening as well as training materials with key information on Conservation Agriculture and Home Gardening and Nutrition.

This Emergency Programme not only brings support to vulnerable families when they need it most but also promotes climate change adaptive farming techniques through extension services, such as Conservation Agriculture, and improved Home Gardening techniques while diversifying production and improving nutrition content. It contributes to the resilience building of communities from the onset of the emergency response.

"All those involved in implementing the Emergency Response Plan both from FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security are very excited to start the distributions to the beneficiaries after long months of preparations. We are particularly thankful to our donors for their confidence and support in assisting the most vulnerable farmers in Lesotho", said Borja Miguez, FAO Emergency Coordinator.

The Emergency Response Plan developed by FAO in coordination with government stakeholders for the period 2016/2017 has an initial budget of USD 11 million. This plan builds on the gains accrued from previous emergency recovery activities (2012-2015)* and responds to the current drought emergency focusing on the most vulnerable households while strengthening national capacities to adapt to Climate Change.

It is funded so far by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Netherlands Government, the Central Emergency Response Fund of the United Nations (CERF) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

*For more information on the FAO Emergency and Resilience Programme, please visit www.lesothocsa.com

Latest update includes Conservation Agriculture TV and Radio clips (in English and Sesotho) available for download.



→ **FAO/Government of Lesotho supports farmers through improved assessment of household seed security**

FAO Seed Security Assessment highlights the importance of supporting seed sector in order to help Basotho farmers recover from natural disasters

Maseru, 21 September 2016 – FAO is helping farmers in Lesotho to cope with the severe impact of El Niño by providing an accurate picture of the seed security situation in the agricultural regions of the country upon which more effective decisions can be made for an adequate response.

In December 2015, the Government of Lesotho declared a State of Emergency following one of the strongest El Niño events on record that led to poor rainfall during the planting season, leading to the lowest agriculture production ever recorded. Besides acute water shortages have affected communities, public services were disrupted and rangeland had not be able to regenerate having a toll on livestock production across the country.

As part of its response plan, the Government and FAO assessed the seed security at household level. During April and May 2016, FAO conducted a Seed Security Assessment, gathering up-to-date reliable information based on the principles of the [Seed Security Conceptual Framework](#) and the [seed security assessment methodology](#). The assessment allowed to interact with all key actors of the seed sector, thus drawing a comprehensive picture of seed availability, seed quality, seed access and varietal suitability, and of the overall ability of households to cope with the current crisis.

Maize, sorghum, beans and wheat, the main crops in Lesotho, are grown by agro-pastoralists farmers under rain-fed conditions. For those crops, the Government-supported input subsidy scheme aims at increasing the availability of quality seeds. However, the assessment showed that a large portion of farmers do not fully benefit from this scheme as they cannot afford the cost of the seeds or fulfil the different requirements. Many of these farmers retain their seed from their last harvest or through their community and family networks.

Because of the impact of the drought, which resulted in a failed or very limited harvest both in quantity and quality, farming households have not been able to keep seeds aside from the last harvest. As a result, thousands of families are more vulnerable to seed shortages for the upcoming planting season (Sep-Nov), especially for beans and maize.

Yves Klompenhouwer, the FAO Representative in Lesotho stated: “The assessment found opportunities through which the seed system can further contribute to agricultural productivity and reduce the negative impact of droughts and improve resilience of livelihoods. We hope the assessment can open up new avenues for progress in these areas”

The assessment also found that the formal seed sector could better address the need for appropriate and affordable quality seed, thus reducing the country’s dependence on the provision of seed from the nearby Republic of South Africa.

The assessment recognised that some measures could improve the seed security of vulnerable farmers in both the short and the long term. Measures drawn from the assessment findings include: improving the availability of open pollinated variety seeds at farmer’s level; supporting local seed production through its integration to the formal seed sector and marketing channels; the promotion of community based seed production and storage; the further refinement of the enabling policy and legal environment, as well as improving the design of the current input subsidy programme.

The assessment report was prepared by FAO in June 2016 with financial support of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).



→ **Beekeeping brings new opportunities for income generation to Lesotho farming community**

FAO project helps farmers diversify their agricultural production

Maseru, 15 October 2016 – In Lesotho, about three quarters of the population is rural with a majority of households relying on agriculture – mostly cereal production and livestock – for their livelihoods. Encouraging farming families to engage in new income generating activities, as suggested in the National Strategic Development Plan, would help them reduce their vulnerability to shocks while increasing their resilience capacity.

Beekeeping requires limited capital for start-up, limited labor for production. It allows to quickly build-up expertise and a short period to break-even. It has a good return to investment (up to three harvests per year). It provides an opportunity to produce for local, national or international markets.

Beekeeping provides an opportunity for farming communities to improve their livelihoods by diversifying their agricultural production. Moreover, bees perform an essential function in food production as it is estimated that one third of the food produced depends on the action of bees or other pollinators. While honey is considered to be the main product of beekeeping, this activity can also yield other profitable products such as, inter alia: propolis (a natural antibiotic), royal jelly (used for medicinal purposes) and beeswax (used in lip balm, skin moisturizer or to make candles).

Currently, most of the beekeepers in Lesotho operate on the basis of low input-low output systems without business plan and records. In average they manage two bee colonies per family. The best producers in Lesotho have more than 40 colonies per person. In the sub-region, production can reach up to 300 colonies per farmer (as reported from Zimbabwe). Hence, promoting investment and good management practices are key for further developing the beekeeping sector.

Since March 2015 the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC) is implementing, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Lesotho, a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) aiming at enhancing national capacity for the sustainable production of honey and other related hive products. Mamabitsa Makara is the National Project Coordinator.

Indeed Lesotho was identified to have high beekeeping potential due to the nature of its indigenous bee species. Wild bees found in Lesotho have shown to be free of traditional bee-related diseases and are able to produce high honey yields in short periods of time.

The Lesotho beekeeping sector can evidently expand further. At the start of the TCP, only a limited number of farmers – 350 families in total – were identified with having interest in honey production throughout the country, the majority of whom practiced beekeeping complementary to their main farming activity.

These few active beekeepers could benefit from technical support and quality technologies to produce high quality honey, which could enhance their production capacity and help them engage in a sustainable commercial activity.

Through the TCP and with assistance from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Marketing and Cooperatives and the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), the intention is to organize beekeepers into associations or cooperatives. Such mobilization will increase beekeepers' chances to be seen as a functional entity and develop market opportunities for their products.

Yves Klompenhouwer, the FAO Representative in Lesotho stated: "We hope beekeeping will progressively evolve into an income-generating activity that supplements the incomes of many Basotho. There is a need to work towards a future platform where all the stakeholders in this value chain jointly pursue their common interest which is to enhance the quantity and quality of production and to assure a profitable access to markets".



To ensure the sustainability of the initiative, one key element of the project is the rehabilitation of the National Apiculture Centre (NAC), whose opening is planned for early December 2016. The main purpose of the ANC is to increase government extension capacities so as to deliver better services to beekeeping communities and newcomers interested in starting-up beekeeping operations.

Furthermore, the project will train up to 700 beekeepers in four targeted districts while also supporting the creation of Bee Farmer Field Schools (BFFS) in the same four districts. These activities, implemented in collaboration with MAFS, will allow farmers engaged in beekeeping to have continuous access to quality training and technical backstopping. A Zimbabwean NGO, Environment Africa, is also involved in the TCP through South-South cooperation to bring capacity building support to the Lesotho project team.

In September 2016, a FAO support mission made up of Rene Czudek, FAO Forestry and Wildlife Officer, Barbora Hladka, FAO Agro-business Officer and Banarbas Mawire, Environment Africa Country Director in Zimbabwe, visited Lesotho to measure the project's progress and bring technical expertise to the national project team. During a three-day training workshop, field technical officers of the MFRSC, representatives of the BFFS from the four project districts and representatives from the SME were trained on *Beekeeping as a Business* by Barbora Hladka.

The development of the Lesotho beekeeping sector brings concrete solutions to the farming community in a context where over a third of its population has been declared in need of humanitarian help for the period 2016-2017. Only long term efforts can make a sustainable impact on the country's food production and improve vulnerable people's livelihoods.

→ **2016 World Food Day brings attention onto Climate Change**

“Climate is changing. Food and Agriculture must too.”

Maseru, 19 October 2016 – Every year, the world is invited to commemorate the World Food Day (WFD) on October 16, in remembrance of the creation of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1945. The WFD presents an opportunity to raise awareness on food-related issues and take stock of progresses made towards reducing poverty and fighting hunger throughout the world.

This year's WFD theme focuses on Climate Change and the need for agriculture to change in response to changing climate. It recognizes that it will be impossible to achieve food security for all and eradicate hunger, malnutrition and poverty without adapting to changing climate. Impacts of climate change and the devastating consequences on food security have been felt across the globe. Sub-Saharan Africa was not spared in 2016 as most countries were affected by drought and heavy flooding events. As a matter of fact, the first half of 2016 was the planet's warmest six-month period on record since 1880, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

This is clear evidence that Climate Change is happening, putting at stake global food security as a result of more frequent extreme weather events that impact negatively food production worldwide.

As we celebrate this year's World Food Day, Lesotho is battling to manage the impact of last year's El-Nino induced drought. The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) Report released in May 2016 estimates that 680,000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance until next year's harvest in May 2017. The frequency of these devastating weather patterns is likely to increase with time. This demands changes in the way we do agriculture. Significant improvements in food security, as well as resilience to climate change can be achieved with the introduction of sustainable agricultural practices.

The agriculture sector in Lesotho is therefore urged to implement programmes that focus on Climate Change adaptation, including climate smart agriculture to improve resilience to climate-induced shocks



and its impact on household food security. Such programmes are essential for Lesotho at a time where the national production of staple maize does not meet its population's demand and where the nutrition situation is critical with over 33% of children under 5 stunted.

During last year's Conference on Climate Change (COP21), all countries around the world committed to do their part to respond to Climate Change, with the signature of the Paris Agreement. On November 4, this agreement will come into force while countries are preparing to meet again for the COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco from 7 to 18 November 2016, to decide on the best way forward in the fight against hunger and poverty.

The WFD celebration in Lesotho is organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) with support from FAO; it will be held in Malefeloane (Mokhotlong District) on the 21st of October 2016.

*For more information on FAO/MAFS Emergency and Resilience Programme, please visit www.lesothocsa.org

→ **Lesotho champions Nutrition and shares experience on cash transfers with home gardening**

Lesotho's experience in supporting Social Protection beneficiaries with home gardening support is presented at the International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition held in Rome (Italy) during the 1st and 2nd of December 2016

Maseru, 08 December 2016 – The International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition was jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Symposium was held on the 1st and 2nd of December 2016, in FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy. The Symposium explored policies and programme options for shaping food systems for delivering foods for a healthy diet, focusing on concrete country experiences and challenges.

At the occasion, His Majesty King Letsie III was appointed as FAO's newest Special Ambassador for Nutrition by the FAO's Director-General, José Graziano da Silva.

The announcement was made at the high-level International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition held to explore country-level challenges and successes in the nutritional reshaping of food production, processing, marketing and retail systems.

Pledging to take up his new role with energy and passion, HM King Letsie III welcomed the fact that nutrition is now firmly on the global agenda. Noting that in Africa just a few years ago, "nutrition was not a priority for discussion, let alone investment," the King said that now "the tide has turned for the better." He encouraged symposium participants to keep up the momentum, adding: "Let us all remember the positive correlation between nutrition and the socio-economic development of nations. It is well fed and well-nourished individuals that can drive the economic development agendas of their countries."

In the context of the Symposium, the FAO Social Protection Team supported the organization of a session dedicated to "Increasing access to healthy diets through social protection and income generation strategies". The purpose of this session was to share countries' experiences in designing policies and nutrition programmes, and discuss on how to better integrate nutrition and social protection. To this end, Mr. Ntitia Tuoane, the Director of Field Services a.i. of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), was invited to share the experience of Lesotho.

The Government of Lesotho has long recognized that social protection is an essential public service and has put in place social protection and complementary programmes to assist vulnerable populations*.

One of the flagships of social protection programmes is the Child Grant Programme (CGP) implemented by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), which provides cash transfers to poor households with orphans or vulnerable children.

In 2013, FAO Lesotho piloted an innovative approach to complement the CGP with a home gardening and nutrition kit. This package is composed of six varieties of vegetable seeds (beetroot, spinach, Florida broad leaf, onions, carrot and English rape), a shade net and training material in Sesotho.

In the context of the El Niño induced drought emergency during the 2015/16 agricultural season, FAO, in partnership with the Government of Lesotho, is upscaling at national level the distribution of home gardening and nutrition kits complementing the cash transfers.

The joint programmes have so far reached 22,000 households throughout Lesotho. Furthermore, training on improved Home Gardening techniques and Nutrition has taken place among MAFS extension services and the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) since 2012 and continues today among all Agricultural Resource Centres and over 600 schools across the country.

Yves Klompenhouwer, the FAO Representative in Lesotho, stated: "With the participation of His Majesty King Letsie III and the presentation of the Lesotho experience by Dr Ntitia of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Lesotho has played a very prominent role at this important International Symposium. His Majesty has been appointed FAO's Special Ambassador on Nutrition and Lesotho is ahead of other African countries in the field of social protection. It is therefore expected to continue to play a prominent role in the international debate on Nutrition and Social Protection. Basotho should really be proud of this achievement."

Mr. Borja Miguélez, FAO-Lesotho's Emergency Coordinator added: "The targeting undertaken by the Ministry of Social Development's Child Grant Programme combined with the technical support provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security goes a very long way in addressing the urgent needs of the Basotho most affected by the latest drought. Moreover, our evaluations indicate that home gardening and cash support combined, have greater impact than when cash and home gardening are provided separately. The Government of Lesotho remains dedicated to this cause, therefore continues to ensure that different sectors work together to optimize the benefits to the populations."

*Documentation on Social Protection Programme implemented by FAO/MAFS is available at <http://www.lesothocsa.com/the-resilience-strategy-documentations.html>

III. Awareness raising and advocacy

→ Leaflet produced for the Regional Conference for Africa with FAO Lesotho contribution – July 2016

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Lesotho and FAO
Building resilience and sustainable food and nutrition security

Lesotho joined the Organization in 1963 and has sought close cooperation with FAO since the establishment of the country office in 1982. The main thrust of assistance has been on the formulation and implementation of policies, programmes, and projects aimed at improving agricultural output, natural resource management and food and nutrition security. More recently, important features of cooperation have included response to agricultural emergencies, climate change adaptation and promotion of sustainable land management principles and practices.

Responding to recurrent agricultural emergencies
 Owing to the increasing frequency of drought-induced agricultural emergencies, FAO has designed an emergency response programme to promote resilient agricultural technologies through training. Between 2011 and 2015, the programme reached 15 000 vulnerable farming households, promoting key technologies and practices such as conservation agriculture and innovative home gardening techniques, as well as training on good nutrition. Agricultural inputs in the form of seeds and herbicides were also distributed to help restore the productive potential of households in need. To ensure a wider adoption of climate-smart agricultural technologies, the programme trained over 300 extension workers, 700 school teachers and 200 youth leaders.

The completion of this programme in 2015 coincided with the severe drought in Southern Africa's continental region. Given the severity of this year's drought and the operational challenges in the field, the challenge of reaching people in need of food assistance by the end of the cropping season in March, FAO has designed a 2016 DRR in response to the emergency. FAO is mobilizing resources from several donors to back the agriculture sector and support measures.

Matching FAO's expertise to Lesotho's needs
 In the wake of the National Strategic Development Plan, the FAO assistance is closely aligned by the 2014–2017 Country Programme Framework (CPF), which focuses on four key areas: **1. Sustainable food and nutrition security, with a focus on strengthening national institutions and farmer organizations to effectively respond to the food and nutrition security challenges.** Such approach is based on responding to the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized, on the use of productivity and resilience enhancing technologies, and on strengthening the sustainable agricultural development through strengthening the capacity of key government institutions and other relevant stakeholders. **2. Resilient natural resources management.** **3. Sustainable management of natural resources, a priority which recognizes land degradation and unsustainable utilization of natural resources in the study region, the challenge will be addressed by enhancing sustainable management of fisheries while including the environment and generate the natural resources base.** **4. Disaster preparedness for home agricultural sector.** The priority involves establishing and strengthening mechanisms, capacity for risk, agricultural resource management and knowledge management.

2016

CONTACTS
 YVES KLOMPENHOUWER
 FAO Representative
 111, Bessie, 11 200 Bessie
 Lesotho
 Tel.: +270 2211 0000
 fax: +270 2211 0000

Combining social protection with agriculture
 Despite the fact that the Government invests around 10 percent of its budget on social protection schemes, including through pensions, cash grants for orphans and vulnerable children, agricultural education and farm grants for rural education, access is not meeting a commensurate return on this investment. Heavy and food insecurity continue to plague the population, while education and health outcomes have not improved. Through an emergency and resilience programme, FAO has demonstrated that a combination of social protection and agriculture leads to better results in terms of poverty and food insecurity reduction than single interventions. Within this framework, FAO provided a small package of vegetable seeds to farm-orientated social protection beneficiaries as well as training on sustainable home gardening techniques. Families receiving this support managed to achieve major increases in vegetable production and animal husbandry, thus increasing their access to fresh vegetable produce and changing the notion that social protection beneficiaries and farm-orientated families have no productive potential.

Preventing natural resources management
 Climate change programming and natural resource management are of crucial importance for increasing the productivity and general well-being of the broader agriculture sector. With this in mind, over the last 12 months a number of complementary projects have been developed with a focus on the environment, natural resources and agricultural extension. One of these initiatives has been focused on strengthening capacity for climate change adaptation. One of these initiatives has been focused on strengthening capacity for climate change adaptation. One of these initiatives has been focused on strengthening capacity for climate change adaptation. One of these initiatives has been focused on strengthening capacity for climate change adaptation.

Strengthening extension services and farmer organizations
 Recognizing the importance of extension services in the provision of extension services and the increasing demand for farmer organizations to provide advisory services to farm households, over the last two years FAO has helped the Lesotho National Extension Centre (LENAC) to develop the technical and operational capacity necessary for effective service delivery. The main thrust of this support was strengthening the capacity of LENAC and its affiliate organizations in capabilities development, human resources management, quality assurance, training, and monitoring and evaluation. The main thrust of this support was strengthening the capacity of LENAC and its affiliate organizations in capabilities development, human resources management, quality assurance, training, and monitoring and evaluation.

→ **FAO Lesotho featured in the In Action section of the FAO corporate website – Sept 2016**

Home > In Action > FAO helps Lesotho in sustainable natural resources management

FAO helps Lesotho in sustainable natural resources management

FAO helps Lesotho develop a comprehensive land cover database.

Key facts

Climate change programming and natural resource management are of crucial importance for increasing the productivity and general well-being of the broader agriculture sector in Lesotho. FAO has been developing a number of complementary projects with a focus on the environment, natural resource management and climate change adaptation. One of these initiatives has been instrumental in bringing users and generators of spatial data on one platform and facilitating the land cover assessment work including the accompanying interpretation processes under

At a glance

WORKING FOR agricultural communities in Lesotho
WORKING TO support natural resources management and land use planning
WORKING WITH the Government of

→ **Conservation Agriculture Booklet**

Production of a Conservation Agriculture booklet to continue raising awareness on Conservation Agriculture. The information is the same as the one in the CA leaflet but put together in a different format.

The booklet can be downloaded from the www.lesothocsa.com website.

→ **FAO Family Farming Knowledge Platform**

Lesotho page accessible via <http://www.fao.org/family-farming/countries/lso/en/>

Family Farming Knowledge Platform

Home Background FamilyFarmingLex Resources **Countries & Regions** Themes Data sources Join Us

Lesotho

Lesotho is a small mountainous land locked country that is fully surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. The total area is 30,355 sq. km and it is divided into four ecological zones, namely the highlands, lowlands, foothills and Senqu river valley. Lesotho has a temperate climate which is largely influenced by its latitudinal location (between 28 and 31) and topography. Annual precipitation is highly variable, both temporally and spatially, ranging from 500mm/year to 1200mm/year most of which is received during summer months, from October to March. Temperatures are highly variable, ranging from -10 to 30 largely depending on the ecological zone. Lesotho's arable land is estimated at 279,773 hectares which comprises 9 percent of the total land area. Lesotho's population is predominantly rural, with 72 percent of the population living in rural areas (BOS, 2011). Agriculture is therefore, an important livelihood activity for a significant proportion of Lesotho's population and is referred to as "the backbone of the economy" despite the fact that overall productivity of the sector and its contribution to the country's GDP remain very low.

[more](#)

→ **Repository website**

A repository website was launched in September 2015, containing all information regarding the Lesotho Resilience Strategy, including all training materials and reports available for download.

The website is accessible at www.lesothocsa.com

The last update was done in August 2016; CA TV and Radio clips are now available for download.

Statistics for the period May 1st to December 31st 2016

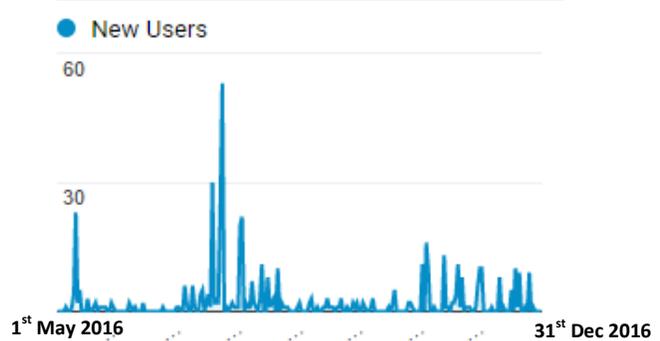
New users and number of sessions per user by country

Country	New Users	Number of Sessions per User
 United Kingdom	219	1.16
 United States	105	1.02
 Lesotho	44	1.46
(not set)	36	1.00
 Italy	18	1.22
 Iraq	17	1.00
 South Africa	17	1.56
 Germany	9	1.44
 Argentina	8	5.11
 Austria	8	1.00

Sessions



New Users



→ **FAO Lesotho featured in ECHO video promoted on social media – Sep 2016**



EU Humanitarian Aid

@eu_echo

Suivre

In [#Lesotho](#), we teach kids how to fight climate change with [@FAOclimate](#) and [@WFP](#).

bit.ly/1BeUxaK



Adjusting to climate change: Gardening classes for pupils in Lesotho

In Lesotho, lessons in vegetable gardening and farming provide 'take home' messages that have the potential to change and protect vulnerable communities when disaster strikes.