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## Humanitarian Appeal 2006: West Bank and Gaza Strip

### Background

For the fourth consecutive year humanitarian agencies are appealing to donors for funding for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The need for yet another appeal stems from a largely unchanged humanitarian situation. Poverty rates have increased in 2005 compared to 2004, largely because the quality of work is lower and households' coping mechanisms are increasingly at risk.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip remain strangled by an inability to freely cross borders to potential markets and also to move within the West Bank. Development remains limited due to Israel's permit and closure system, regulating movements of people and goods, the establishment of settlements, as well as road construction and control of water resources.

The labour market is characterized by informal, short-term and low-paid work. Poverty has climbed to 64 percent and unemployment is at 27 percent, almost three times as high as in 2000. The situation is particularly grave in the Gaza Strip, where almost all areas are experiencing high levels of food insecurity.

If the policy of restricted access is not eased, increased donor spending will have limited impact on alleviating poverty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, maintaining humanitarian assistance levels remains crucial. Coping mechanisms - such as using remaining savings, going into debt with neighbours and relying increasingly on credit - are unsustainable. The fact that people are increasingly relying on them reinforces the importance of humanitarian assistance as a form of income support that allows people to concentrate resources on other essential needs. Reducing humanitarian assistance is likely to put extreme stress on these already-stretched strategies and increase poverty.

This humanitarian picture has persisted despite positive political momentum over the past year. The election of President Abbas and Israel's disengagement from settlements in the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank has infused momentum into a sluggish peace process. There has also been some positive easing of movement in the West Bank in the first half of 2005. The problem is that as yet none of these developments have made a dent in the key humanitarian indicators of the current crisis.

### Needs analysis: Food security and agriculture sectors

In 2004, 71.8 percent of the households in West Bank and Gaza Strip confirmed a need for aid, with 600 000 Palestinians unable to afford basic necessities for subsistence. The agricultural sector continues to play a crucial role for achieving food security for a considerable portion of the Palestinian population. The majority of the Palestinians benefit from the flexibility and sustainability of the agricultural sector in meeting basic food requirements. The contribution of agriculture to employment has risen from 12.7 percent in 1995, to about 16 percent in 2005. In addition, agriculture has provided work for more than 39 percent of those who work in informal sectors.

Traditional crops include olives, citrus, vegetables, grapes, bananas, figs, plums, melons, almonds, and field crops. The agricultural sector also provides vital raw material for many Palestinian industries related to food, fodders, leather, shoes, soap, furniture and cosmetics. The linkage between agriculture and agro-industry would benefit from further investment which would have positive repercussions on demand for local labour and access to consumption goods. The emergence of quality "Made in Palestine" food products could be exploited successfully for export purposes.

A major constraint for developing the sector is the scarcity, inefficient use and over-exploitation of water resources. The agricultural sector consumes 70 percent of all water. Other constraints affecting agricultural incomes are the loss of access to markets, movement restrictions, leveling of agricultural areas and poor access to water resources.

The FAO component of the CAP for the West Bank and Gaza Strip concentrates on recovery of rural livelihoods and employment creation, support to the development of markets, as well as improving farm practices for products such as olive oil and other fruit tree crops (i.e. dates) and horticultural products. Special attention is also given to animal health, capacity building and the procurement of agricultural production inputs.

### Proposals: FAO relief and rehabilitation assistance

**Funding required: US\$ 6 440 000<sup>1</sup>**

#### - FAO Programme Coordination

**Issues addressed:** Through an operational Programme Coordination Office in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS), FAO will be able to provide continued technical support to the agriculture sector and to exercise a coordinating role both for FAO activities and for those of other agencies/donors/implementing partners working in the agriculture sector.

**Objectives:** Support FAO programme coordination and improve the effectiveness of interventions in the fields of agriculture and food security in WBGS.

**Activities:** The project will support the Coordination Office focusing on coordination and advocacy activities as well as providing technical expertise to national and local authorities at the governmental level, and local NGOs at the community level.

**Beneficiaries:** Vulnerable and food insecure Palestinians in the WBGS.

**Implementing partners:** FAO, Ministry of Agriculture, UN Agencies, NGOs.

**Duration:** 12 months.

**Funds requested:** US\$440 000.

#### - Emergency relief for most vulnerable farmers

**Appealing agencies:** FAO / UNDP

**Issues addressed:** In the areas close to the Green Line border with Israel, more than 3 000 farmer families cannot reach their farm land that supports

20 000 individuals and provides employment to 6 500 farmers.

**Objectives:** Help the neediest families to improve their physical and economic access to food.

**Activities:** Support farmers with production inputs and technical expertise to reestablish their activities west of the wall. Rehabilitation and maintenance of water infrastructure. Material and technical support to small-scale livestock projects in areas west of the wall. Training of agriculturally active women and young people in target locations to enable them to provide services to local communities. Assistance to market farmers' olive oil.

**Beneficiaries:** 1 000 farm families north of the West Bank.

**Implementing partners:** Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Women's Affairs, NGOs, Cooperatives.

**Duration:** 12 months.

**Funds requested:** US\$3 600 000.

#### **- Emergency relief for sheep and goat farmers on the eastern slopes**

**Appealing agencies:** FAO / UNDP

**Issues addressed:** Lands on the West Bank have been severely degraded and show a decline in terms of grazing capacity. Prevailing conditions, including confiscation of land, closure of grazing areas and erection of the separation wall are creating harsh conditions for sheep and goat farmers.

**Objectives:** Assist vulnerable farmers suffering from hardships to improve their livelihoods by generating incomes and improving access to food.

**Activities:** Support sheep and goat farmers with farm inputs and technical expertise. Assist farmers to rehabilitate their farms and improve productive infrastructure. Improve animal health. Build capacity of MoA and other local organizations to provide support services. Build capacity of grass roots organizations to managing emergency situations. Facilitate marketing of livestock products.

**Beneficiaries:** 1 000 farmer families in the eastern slopes (Bedouins and non-Bedouins).

**Implementing partners:** Ministry of Agriculture, MoLG (Village Councils), Grass roots organizations, Community Leaders.

**Duration:** 12 months.

**Funds requested:** US\$1 130 000.

#### **- Improvement of food security and gender equity through household food production**

**Appealing agencies:** FAO / UNDP

**Issues addressed:** Low incomes. Poor access to fresh foods. Gender inequity.

**Objectives:** Improvement of physical and economic access to food.

**Activities:** Provision of agricultural inputs. Training of trainers in techniques appropriate to peri-urban agriculture, sensitization and short training sessions on gender analysis to raise awareness on the importance of gender mainstreaming. Training of beneficiaries in the production and preservation of end-products. Empowering women's associations to help them play a greater role in cooperative production and marketing.

**Beneficiaries:** 300 vulnerable families.

**Implementing partners:** Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Women's Affairs, NGOs.

**Duration:** 12 months.

**Funds requested:** US\$1 200 000.

#### **- Reducing the mortality rate of new born calves in the dairy farms in West Bank**

**Appealing agencies:** FAO / UNDP

**Issues addressed:** Poor productivity and profitability of the dairy sector due to inadequate infrastructure and technical facilities, limited technical capacity, poor veterinary services, and high mortality rate of new born calves.

**Objectives:** Improving the livelihood of dairy cattle farmers and their families through improving the health status of their cattle.

**Activities:** Provide emergency assistance to farmers to enable them restoring and improving production activities. A perinatal disease control and prevention programme will be implemented on the beneficiaries' farms and combined with technical training.

**Beneficiaries:** 3 200 large ruminant farmers.

**Implementing partners:** Ministry of Agriculture.

**Duration:** 12 months.

**Funds requested:** US\$558 000.

#### **- Restoration of agricultural production in Gaza Strip following disengagement**

**Appealing agencies:** FAO / UNDP

**Issues addressed:** Lack of productive assets. Poor infrastructure. Poor technical capacity.

**Objectives:** Re-start the production cycle for farmers whose farms were destroyed, reducing poverty, improving food security and reducing unemployment in Gaza Strip.

**Activities:** Reconstruction and rehabilitation of agricultural roads, water wells and cisterns, livestock sheds, irrigation systems, storage, packaging and marketing facilities for plant and animal produce. Procurement of agricultural inputs and technical support for horticultural production, i.e. reconstruction/rehabilitation of destroyed greenhouses, support to greenhouse and open field vegetable production and improvement in the quality and marketability of agricultural production (horticulture and livestock).

**Beneficiaries:** 2 000 poor farming families who lost their source of income.

**Total direct beneficiaries:** more than 12 000 vulnerable people.

**Implementing partners:** Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs.

**Duration:** 12 months.

**Funds requested:** US\$9 000 000.

#### **- Support to vulnerable fishers in Gaza Strip to restore their fishing activities after disengagement**

**Appealing agencies:** FAO / UNDP

**Issues addressed:** During the second Intifada, fishers were prohibited from using the ports of Khan Yunis and in Rafah, resulting in a 30 percent drop in fish production and the loss of livelihoods for 850 fisher households. Most of their fishing boats and equipment were destroyed at the time.

**Objectives:** Help the most vulnerable fishers to restore and improve their livelihoods after disengagement through rehabilitation of fishing infrastructure and technical support.

**Activities:** Provision of production inputs to fishers to enable them to restore fishing activities. Rehabilitation and maintenance of boats. Technical support to ensure high product quality and profitability, as well as aquatic ecological balance.

**Beneficiaries:** 850 fishers in Khan Yunis and Rafah.

**Implementing partners:** Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs, Cooperatives.

**Duration:** 12 months.

**Funds requested:** US\$3 000 000.

<sup>1</sup> In order to take advantage of complementary capacities, FAO has appealed jointly with UNDP for a total of approximately US\$18 500 000 for six project proposals in addition to one FAO Programme Coordination proposal. The actual share of FAO in the joint FAO/UNDP proposals remains to be determined but is unlikely to exceed US\$6 000 000.