



World Food Programme



Ebola leaves hundreds of thousands facing hunger in three worst-hit countries

WFP-FAO News Video

TRT:02:40

Location: Sierra Leone, Liberia

Shotlist:

00:00-00:10 Mabureh, Waterloo, Sierra Leone

Shot 12 December 2014

Kids waiting outside distribution registration office
Villagers listening to info regarding food distribution

00:10-00:18 Mabureh, Waterloo, Sierra Leone

Shot 12 December 2014

WFP food distribution, people get 50kg of rice, 9kg of a highly nutritional blend of corn and soy,
9kg of pulses, salt and 5 liters of vegetable oil.
WFP will distribute to a total of 48,000 households during nine days.

People collecting food

00:18-00:45 Mabureh, Waterloo, Sierra Leone

Shot 12 December 2014

SOT (Krio) Ms Mbalu Thelly. Resident of the village

“If I did not get this food, I would have to be going around (and) with this Ebola going on I might get the virus. But now they have given me the food, I will be able to sit at home and manage with my family so we do not have to go out and get food from outside. I am so happy and really appreciate what they have done for us. “

00:45-01:03 Mabureh, Waterloo, Sierra Leone

Shot 12 December 2014

WFP food distribution, people leaving with their food ration

01:03-01:40 Mabureh, Waterloo, Sierra Leone

Shot 12 December 2014

Sot Francis Boima WFP Sierra Leone

“The World Food Programme and its cooperating partner CIDO, are undertaking large scale food distribution to about 47,000 households in the waterloo area. As you may know Freetown or the western area accounts for half of the newly infected cases



in Sierra Leone. So the aim of this food distribution is to let family households have enough food so that they will not need to go out looking for food and in the process infecting others. “

01:40-01:52 Waterloo, Sierra Leone

Shot 12 December 2014

Kadiatu Karbo cooking WFP rice outside her home

01:52-02:07 Monrovia, Liberia

Shot: 20 Nov 2014

GV's market

02:07-02:23 Fengeham Village, Bo District, Sierra Leone

Shot 4th June 2014

Farmers preparing land for rice planting

Child pounding grain

02:23-02:40 Kenima Town, Kenima District, Sierra Leone

Shot 4th June 2014

Rice threshing GVs

END

WFP/FAO Joint News Release

17 December 2014

EBOLA LEAVES HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS FACING HUNGER IN THREE WORST-HIT COUNTRIES

Lack of access to food in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone could threaten over one million people

Rome - The number of people facing food insecurity due to the Ebola epidemic in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone could top one million by March 2015 unless access to food is drastically improved and measures are put in place to safeguard crop and livestock production, two UN agencies warned.

The disease's impact is potentially devastating in the three countries already coping with chronic food insecurity, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) said in three country reports published today.

Border closures, quarantines, hunting bans and other restrictions are seriously hindering people's access to food, threatening their livelihoods, disrupting food markets and processing chains, and exacerbating shortages stemming from crop losses in areas with the highest Ebola infection rates, the FAO-WFP reports stressed.

In December 2014, half a million people are estimated to be severely food insecure in the three worst hit Western African countries.

The loss of productivity and household income due to Ebola-related deaths and illness as well as people staying away from work, for fear of contagion, is compounding an economic slowdown in the three countries.

The situation comes at a time when more food needs to be imported by all three countries, but revenues derived from export commodities are affected.

In their reports, the Rome-based FAO and WFP underscore how the outbreak of Ebola has caused a significant shock to the food and agriculture sectors in the affected countries.

While estimated crop losses appear relatively modest at national level, sharp disparities in production have emerged between areas with high infection rates and other regions in the three worst-hit countries.

In particular, labour shortages have marred farming operations such as planting and weeding while movement restrictions and fear of the disease have disrupted agricultural market chains.

"The outbreak has revealed the vulnerability of current food production systems and value chains in the worst Ebola-affected countries", said FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, Bukar Tijani. "FAO and partners need to act urgently to overcome the agriculture and market disruptions and their immediate impact on livelihoods which could result in a food security crisis. With timely support, we can prevent the outbreak from having a severe and long-lasting impact on rural communities," he added.

"The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa has been a wake-up call for the world", said WFP Emergency Response Coordinator Denise Brown in Dakar. "The virus is having a terrible impact on the three worst-hit countries and will continue to affect many people's access to food for the foreseeable future. While working with partners to make things better, we must be prepared for them to get worse," she said.

Call for urgent action

FAO and WFP call for urgent action to re-establish the farming system in the three countries. Measures should enable most severely affected people to access agricultural inputs, such as seeds and fertilizers, in time for the next planting season and adopt improved technology to address labour shortages. The reports also recommend cash transfers or vouchers for affected people to buy food as a way of overcoming their income loss and help stimulate markets.

These efforts should go hand in hand with ongoing actions aimed at stopping the spread of the disease such as awareness-raising and related training.

In numbers

In Guinea, 230 000 people are estimated to be severely food insecure because of the impact of Ebola, and by March 2015, the number is expected to swell to more than 470 000. Aggregate food crop production in Guinea for 2014 is expected to be about three percent lower than in the previous year.

In Liberia, 170 000 people are estimated to be severely food insecure because of the impact of Ebola, and by March 2015, the number is expected to swell to almost 300 000. The rapid growth in the spread of Ebola in Liberia coincided with the crop-growing and harvesting periods, and farm labour shortages have resulted in an estimated 8 percent decline in aggregate food crop production.

In Sierra Leone, FAO-WFP estimates for November 2014 indicate that 120 000 people in Sierra Leone are severely food insecure due to the impact of Ebola. By March 2015, this number is expected to climb to 280 000. Aggregate food production is estimated to be 5 percent lower than 2013. However, rice production is expected to dip by as much as 17 per cent in one of the country's most infected areas, Kailahun, which is usually one of the country's most productive agricultural areas.

FAO and WFP's response to the crisis

FAO is providing assistance to 200 000 people in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Crucial activities include community campaigns to help stop the spread of the disease, strengthening savings and loan schemes, particularly those involving women; and provision of in-kind or financial support to vulnerable households to safeguard livelihoods and incomes.

WFP is focusing on meeting the basic food and nutrition needs of affected families and communities in the three worst-affected countries. So far, WFP has provided food assistance to more than two million people. WFP is also providing crucial transport and logistics support, particularly to medical partners, and is building Ebola treatments centres and storage hubs for humanitarian interventions.

The scope of the crisis remains large in 2015, and both UN agencies urgently require more funding to continue to assist the most vulnerable communities whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by the disease.

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WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience. In 2013, WFP assisted more than 80 million people in 75 countries.

The Food and Agriculture Organization leads international efforts to defeat hunger. We help developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition for all. FAO focuses special attention on developing rural areas, home to 70 percent of the world's poor and hungry people.

For more information please contact:

Zoie Jones, WFP/Rome, Tel (+39) 06 6513 3940, Mob. (+39) 342 902 5566 cell. zoie.jones@wfp.org

David Orr, WFP/Dakar, Tel. (+221) 338 496 50; Mob. (+221) 776 375 964 cell. david.orr@wfp.org

Peter Mayer, FAO Media Relations (Rome). Tel (+39) 06 570 53304. peter.mayer@fao.org

Sonia Nguyen, FAO (Dakar). Tel (+221) 33 889 16 28, Mob (+221) 77 333 12 89 cell. sonia.nguyen@fao.org