



AGIR - Building resilience in the Sahel and West Africa

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

Successive food and nutrition crises in 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2012

Humanitarian situation still worrisome in the entire Sahel region with:

- About 42 million food insecure people in 2017 (15 million requiring emergency food assistance during the lean season)
- 8.7 million children under five suffering from Global Acute Malnutrition (3.3 million facing Severe Acute Malnutrition)
- Around 25 million people living in extreme poverty

The EU aims to mobilise **€1.5 billion** for resilience in the Sahel in 2014-2020 (11th European Development Fund)

AGIR targets by 2032:

- Zero Hunger
- Reduce chronic malnutrition by more than half
- Reduce acute malnutrition by more than two-thirds
- Increase the number of people with access to basic services and social transfers such as cash or vouchers

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Pastureland and water for livestock are becoming scarce. © WFP/Rein Skullerud

Key messages

- AGIR - the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative - was launched during the Sahel food and [nutrition](#) crisis of 2012 with the aim of achieving 'Zero Hunger' in the West Africa Sahel region by 2032. The EU was closely involved in establishing AGIR and continues to provide support.
- Emergencies and crises have become a permanent reality for many people in the Sahel and West Africa. Humanitarian aid provides vital relief but cannot prevent crises. To break the cycle of emergencies, it is crucial for governments and international aid organisations to work together to build the resilience of the most vulnerable population groups.
- Building resilience is about understanding and addressing the root causes of crises and pushing for durable improvements with a specific target on the most vulnerable people.
- Successful resilience building requires a joint approach to relief, development and governance. It is about bridging the gap between humanitarian and development aid. It is also about encouraging governments to take ownership and supporting them to achieve their resilience agenda.
- The momentum created by AGIR has prompted ten countries in the region to adopt national resilience priorities. They are seeking comprehensive support from the international aid community to translate these priorities into effective action.

Situation in the Sahel

The Sahel has seen a quick succession of food and nutrition crises over the last decade. They have highlighted the population's vulnerability to shocks such as droughts, food price rises, floods, epidemics and conflict. Many people face food insecurity and malnutrition on an almost permanent basis, regardless of whether harvests have been good or bad. Every year, close to 1.5 million children become severely malnourished, and this figure excludes Nigeria. During the 2017 lean season, 3.3 million people are estimated to suffer from Severe Acute Malnutrition in West Africa and the Sahel region. They depend on life-saving nutrition support. 42 million people are experiencing food insecurity, of whom 15 million are suffering from severe food insecurity during the lean season and therefore need emergency food assistance.

Food prices remain high in conflict-affected areas while there are signs of unusual inflation in some areas of the Sahel strip, limiting access to staple foods for a large majority of poor households.

Conflict, insecurity and population displacement persists due to the Mali regional crisis and Boko Haram violence in the Lake Chad basin.

Child and maternal mortality rates in West Africa rank among the highest in the world. One in eight children dies before his fifth birthday, often as a result of preventable diseases and malnutrition. Women in the Sahel have a 200 times higher risk of dying in childbirth than women in Europe.

Origins and aims of AGIR

Launched in December 2012, the aim of AGIR is to help build resilience to the recurrent food and nutrition crises that affect the Sahel. The premise is that these crises can and should be eradicated. While urgent relief remains a necessity, focusing on the root causes of crises will eventually reduce the number of emergencies and their cost. A sustained effort is therefore needed to reduce people's vulnerability to crises and increase their resilience. AGIR defines resilience as "*the capacity of vulnerable households, families and systems to face uncertainty and the risk of shocks, to withstand and respond effectively to shocks, and to recover and adapt in a sustainable manner.*"

The AGIR Alliance brings together West African governments, regional organizations, donors and the aid community to achieve 'Zero Hunger' within 20 years by focusing on four strategic pillars:

- Restore, strengthen and secure livelihoods and improve social protection for the most vulnerable communities and households.
- Strengthen health and nutrition of vulnerable households.
- Sustainably strengthen agricultural and food productivity, incomes of vulnerable households and improve their access to food.
- Strengthen governance for [food](#) and nutritional security, incl. gender and population aspects.

Appropriate targeting of people in need of support based on their economic situation and vulnerability, notably children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women, is key to AGIR success. To measure AGIR's progress, a Regional Roadmap set indicators which include:

- A significant increase of vulnerable people with access to basic social services such as health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and who are able to increase their income.
- A reduction of at least 50% of people seeking humanitarian and food aid in high-risk zones.
- A prevalence of global acute malnutrition among children under five which is less than 5% throughout the year (currently often 15%).
- A child mortality rate of less than 2 deaths per 10 000 children.
- Significant progress on spacing births and increasing the age of first pregnancy.

Milestones

Since its launch, AGIR has achieved the following:

- Adoption of the AGIR Regional Road Map in April 2013
- Announcement of €1.5 billion in EU support for building resilience in West Africa between 2014 and 2020, under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF)



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- 17 West African countries committed to AGIR, of which ten have already adopted their national resilience priorities. International partners of AGIR are to coordinate support for adopted resilience priorities and to assess progress regularly.

