



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels
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COMMISSION DECISION

of [...]

**amending Commission Decision C(2010) 686
of 8 February 2010 on the approval and financing of a Global Plan for humanitarian
actions in the Sahel region of West Africa from the general budget of the European
Union**

(ECHO/-WF/BUD/2010/01000)

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(ECHO/-WF/BUD/2010/01000)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid¹, and in particular Articles 2, 4 and 15(3) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Commission Decision C(2010) 686, adopted on 8 February 2010, allocates a total of EUR 20,000,000 from the general budget of the European Union to finance humanitarian aid operations in West Africa. Its objective is to bring multi-sector and food aid to the region at a critical juncture, in particular during the "lean" period when nutritional needs are greatest. The implementation period of the Decision was 18 months, starting on 1 January 2010.
- (2) The nutritional situation had already been causing serious concern, but spring 2010 saw it intensify to become a major food crisis. This was due to several factors, among which the low agricultural yields and poor grazing land, particularly in Niger and Chad, the high prices for raw materials and food products on international and local markets, the structural weaknesses of household budgets (further exacerbated by the fall in remittances from migrant workers in Europe as a result of the financial crisis), and global warming, which is causing gradual desertification leading to a fall in the natural resources on which an ever increasing population depends.
- (3) As studies carried out by the United Nations, amongst others, have shown, global acute malnutrition rates in children under five continue to range during the lean period from the alert threshold of 10% in some countries to the emergency threshold of 15%² in others, even up to 20% in certain localities. As a result of the food crisis, the number of people at high risk of food insecurity is estimated by the United Nations at seven million in Niger and two million in Chad. Studies have also shown that other

¹ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

² Source: UNICEF – WHO.

Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and the Sahel zones of coastal countries such as Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo) are also affected, although to a lesser extent.

- (4) The Niger Government called for international aid on 7 April 2010 and has had to re-assess its needs several times since, for instance on 23 June, when it published a new 'Revised National Action Plan' intended to draw the attention of humanitarian partners and donors to the country's situation. On 22 July the World Food Programme announced a USD 213,000,000 emergency operation³ in response to these increased needs and called for donations.
- (5) The extra needs identified concern food aid but also multi-sector aid to support healthcare systems in particular. Care for the most vulnerable people suffering from acute malnutrition must be scaled up. Furthermore, several studies by the World Health Organisation have demonstrated the high correlation between malnutrition and disease.
- (6) With Cameroon now also affected by high levels of malnutrition (above the emergency threshold) and a health situation causing serious concern⁴, which is currently being re-assessed by UNICEF, it would seem necessary to include it in the list of countries eligible for this Global Plan. The Sahel zone in West Africa covered by this Decision therefore includes the following countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and the Sahel zones of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.
- (7) The budget allocated to Decision C(2010) 686 should therefore be increased by EUR 20,000,000, including EUR 10,000,000 from budget article 23 02 01 and EUR 10,000,000 from budget article 23 02 02, to meet the increased humanitarian needs arising from the worsening of the food and nutritional crisis in the Sahel, and Decision C(2010) 686 should be amended accordingly.
- (8) The validity of Decision C(2010) 686 should also be extended until 30 September 2011, the further three months being necessary in order to complete the operations covered by this Decision in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.
- (9) In accordance with Article 17(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996, the Humanitarian Aid Committee delivered a favourable opinion on 23 September 2010,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

Decision C(2010) 686 is hereby amended as follows:

1. Article 1(2) is replaced by the following:

³ Source: 'Niger EMOP 200170'.

⁴ Source: UNICEF, 2007.

"2. In accordance with Articles 2 and 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96, the main objective of this Decision is to help reduce acute malnutrition in children under five and in pregnant and nursing women in the Sahel and to bring it back under the emergency thresholds in a sustainable way.

Humanitarian measures shall be implemented to achieve the following specific objectives:

Specific objective 1:

- To support the effective and replicable treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition through the provision of multi-sector aid.

A total of EUR **15,000,000** under budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this specific objective.

Specific objective 2:

- To support the overall strategy for reducing acute malnutrition through the provision of food aid.

A total of EUR **25,000,000** under budget article 23 02 02 is allocated to this specific objective."

2. Article 2(1) is replaced by the following:

"1. "The period for the implementation of the operations financed under this Global Plan shall start on 1 January 2010 and shall run for 21 months. Eligible expenditure shall be committed during the implementing period of the Decision."

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission

Decision amending Humanitarian Aid Decision C(2010) 686

ECHO/-WF/BUD/2010/01000

Title: Commission Decision amending Commission Decision C(2010) 686 of 8 February 2010 on the approval and financing of a Global Plan for humanitarian actions in the Sahel region of West Africa from the general budget of the European Union.

Description: Humanitarian and food aid for the most vulnerable sections of the population.

Location of intervention: **West Africa**

Amount of Decision: EUR 40,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/-WF/BUD/2010/01000

1. Explanatory Memorandum

Reason for the amendment

The nutritional situation in the Sahel had already been causing serious concern, with global acute malnutrition rates for children under five ranging from the alert threshold of 10% to the emergency threshold of over 15%¹, and even 20% in some localities, but it has now intensified to become a food crisis reminiscent of 2005. The Sahel is currently at a cyclical low in terms of market conditions and the financial capacity of households, resulting in a lower availability of food and difficulty in accessing it. The cycle is also becoming shorter, illustrating the extreme structural vulnerability of the Sahel countries to external factors and their adverse effects. The emergence of a new humanitarian crisis, as feared a year ago, has now been confirmed.

Cereal production is declining: forecasts for 2010 point to a decrease of 26% in Niger and 34% in Chad compared with 2009². Food and raw material prices have risen overall by 20% to 25% compared with the average for the previous five years³, and they are tending to stabilise at these levels or rise even further, though differences in grain prices from one local market to another are narrowing, indicating more effective early warning systems. Climate change has had a definite quantifiable impact on, for instance, the survival of livestock in some parts of the Sahel⁴. Livestock is a major source of income for local people and sometimes the only source of money. Erratic rainfall in recent months in Burkina Faso and Niger has also affected yields, with flooding ruining much arable land⁵.

The countries of the region have many endemic diseases which, combined with high rates of malnutrition, are life-threatening for children under five in particular. Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso and, to a lesser extent, Nigeria experienced epidemics of measles, malaria and

¹ Source: UNICEF-WHO.

² Source: FEWS NET reports.

³ Source: FEWS NET reports.

⁴ Source: Oxfam Mali.

⁵ Source: The International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

meningitis in March⁶. In its statement of 9 April 2010 on Niger the World Health Organisation once again highlighted the link between malnutrition and disease⁷.

Economic factors also weigh heavily. Remittances from overseas workers have declined as a result of the global economic crisis, especially the recession in the euro area, where many expatriates from Sahel countries live. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that transfers of funds have fallen by between 3% and 14%, depending on the country, with an estimated impact of 2 percentage points of Gross Domestic Product in the countries most dependent on these funds⁸. Given that remittances can account for up to 15% of GDP in the Sahel countries (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger), a reduction is very likely to affect households, two-thirds of which live on less than two dollars a day. Many households have had to dispose of some of their assets just to survive, effectively mortgaging their future and their ability to get back on their feet when times improve. The extreme fragility of the most vulnerable groups is thus exacerbated, particularly compared with earlier forecasts.

Niger is the epicentre of the crisis. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the country was the bottom-ranked country in the human development index (HDI) in 2009⁹. Niger is a landlocked country unable to influence the terms of trade, which have become especially unfavourable with the steady depreciation of the Nigerian naira against the CFA franc. Bulk purchases of cereals by Nigerian traders in the markets of southern Niger have further contributed to shortages. The World Food Programme (WFP) has put the cost of meeting humanitarian needs in the current food crisis at USD 213,000,000¹⁰.

Niger's neighbours are in a similar situation. Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad are respectively placed 178th, 177th and 175th among the 182 countries on the HDI. The regions on Niger's borders are the worst affected: western Chad, north-western Burkina Faso, northern and eastern Mali and northern Nigeria. Some parts of Chad, like the Sahel Belt, suffer high rates of malnutrition that can reach 20%¹¹. Nor is Mauritania spared: the findings of surveys conducted by UNICEF in June 2010 confirmed the persistence of worrying pockets of malnutrition and global acute malnutrition, above all in southern and central parts of the country.

Acute malnutrition among children under five in the Sahelian areas of Cameroon, which are landlocked and out of the reach of public services, is also close to or above the emergency thresholds. In 2007 the global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate was 15.1% in the north-east and 14.2% in the far north¹². A community-based programme has been launched to tackle malnutrition, but it is far too little to meet needs effectively. In Cameroon's two northern regions 19.3% of children did not reach the age of five, against 14.4% nationally, evidence of a particularly poor health system and bad practices. UNICEF is dispatching teams of experts

⁶ Source: WHO.

⁷ Source: http://www.who.int/hac/crises/ner/statement_9apr10/en/index.html.

⁸ Source: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2010/02/pdf/appendix.pdf>.

⁹ Human Development Report 2009, UNDP.

¹⁰ Source: Niger EMOP 200170.

¹¹ Chad - Kanem 20% GAM (DHS 2004) and Chad - Kanem 20% GAM (ACF F September 2008).

¹² Source: Unicef 2007.

to the Sahelian regions of Cameroon to update its information on the situation and is expected to publish its findings in autumn 2010.

In this difficult situation the countries of the region have shown great resilience and responsiveness. Since spring this year the authorities of Niger and Chad have been distributing food at subsidised prices (30% lower). The Niger government appealed for international aid on 7 April and has revised its assessment of the food situation; on 23 June it published a revised National Action Plan and has since published other updated summary reports on the food and nutrition situation. The latest government paper, published on 16 July, reports on a very serious situation for nearly 7,000,000 people facing severe food insecurity and acute malnutrition¹³. In Chad, two million people are in this situation.

After reviewing other contributions from other international donors, it appears crucial to mobilise additional response capacity to meet the needs of about 1,000,000 malnourished children in addition to those already receiving treatment. The response capacity of our operational partners has been strengthened. The areas of the Sahel with the highest levels of malnutrition and the least domestic response capacity will be given priority. To ensure the sustainability of these measures, interventions will be based on nutritional support in accordance with the current standards in force and integrated into the existing health structures, which will give malnourished children better access to care. The measures will be coordinated with the nutritional and humanitarian interventions in countries of the region financed by the European Development Fund and the European Union budget.

In these circumstances the duration of the Decision's implementation period will have to be extended until 30 September 2011 and the amount of multi-sectoral assistance (budget line 23 02 01) raised to EUR 15,000,000 and the amount of food aid (budget line 23 02 02) to EUR 25,000,000. The larger budget will help both the Commission and its partners to respond to the considerable nutritional needs, especially during this lean period, a critical time for the people of the Sahel.

2. Proposed amendment

It is proposed to increase the amount of multi-sectoral assistance (budget line 23 02 01) to EUR 15,000,000 and the amount of food aid (budget line 23 02 02) to EUR 25,000,000.

¹³ Source: http://www.cic.ne/IMG/pdf/Bulletin_Flash_juillet_2010.pdf.