

Briefing Note – 19 August 2015

Burkina Faso

Floods



Need for international assistance	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major

Crisis Overview

24,354 people (3,080 households) have been affected by heavy winds and floods in seven regions of Burkina Faso. Eight have been killed and 54 injured. The most affected areas were Bissighin and Kilwin neighbourhoods in the capital Ouagadougou (Centre region), and Dalo department (Centre Ouest region). 1,184 people were also affected in Wendpoli in the Sahel region, where food insecurity is high. Significant property damage was reported, as well as food stocks and other material having been carried away by the floods. 2,430 people have been temporarily rehoused in schools. Rains are expected to continue until the end of August, and gaps have been identified in the response for food security, health, rehabilitation and protection.

Affected regions	Affected by floods	Affected by heavy winds
Centre	12,137	423
Centre Ouest	4,150	0
Hauts-Bassins	2,196	0
Nord	114	1,689
Est	565	1,222
Sahel	1,184	71
Boucle du Mouhoun	0	603
Total	20,346	4,008

Key Findings

Anticipated scope and scale

- Nearly 25,000 people have been affected by floods and heavy winds so far in Burkina Faso, with Centre, Centre Ouest and Haut-Bassins regions most affected.
- The Government is planning for up to 122,000 people affected by the end of the rainy season in September.
- High food insecurity in affected regions has aggravated the impact of the floods and heavy winds and the response could also be destabilised by political instability.

Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- Shelter:** 3,200 people rendered homeless by the floods; among those, 2,430 have been temporarily rehoused in schools and require assistance;
- Food:** Food stocks and livestock have been carried away by the floods, endangering the situation for populations already affected by food insecurity during the lean season.
- WASH and health:** There is a risk of water-borne diseases spreading, due to a lack of potable water and proper sanitation systems in many affected areas. Mobile latrines are among the priority needs.

Humanitarian constraints

Some attempts to disrupt assessment teams' work in affected areas have been reported in a context of political instability.

Limitations

There are no detailed assessments on affected populations' needs and the ongoing response.

Crisis Impact

As of 12 August, heavy winds and floods in seven regions in Burkina Faso (Nord, Est, Centre, Centre Ouest, Hauts Bassins, Boucle du Mouhoun, and Sahel) have affected 24,354 people (3,080 households), killed eight and injured 54. Bissighin and Kilwin neighbourhoods in the capital Ouagadougou in Kadiogo province (Central region), and Dallo department in Ziro province (Central West region) were most affected. 1,184 people were also affected in Wendpoli in the Sahel region, where food insecurity is high (OCHA, 12/08/2015; local media, 17/08/2015). Significant property damage was reported, as well as food stocks and other material having been carried away by the floods (local media, 03/08/2015). Rains are expected to continue until the end of August, while the current response is reportedly not proportionate to the increasing needs (PI, 17/08/2015). Gaps were identified in the response for food security, health, rehabilitation and protection (loss of legal documents) (ECHO, 07/08/2015).

Access to Essential Services

Shelter: 1,240 houses have been destroyed, and nearly 3,700 people rendered homeless. 2,430 people have been temporarily rehoused in schools, but the Government has asked for them to be vacated before school starts administratively in mid-September. Shelter has been identified as a priority need (OCHA, 12/08/2015; IRIN, 07/08/2015; UNICEF, 14/08/2015).

Food: Food is among the main needs of populations affected by the floods. More than 64 tonnes of cereal harvests and livestock were carried away by the floods, leaving households with few or no food reserves and prone to negative coping mechanisms. Many Burkinabe have now lost their places of business and means of agricultural production, which will call for income-generating activities (IRIN, 07/08/2015).

Health: Medication has been identified as among the main needs. Many parts of Ouagadougou, and Bama department in Houet province (Hauts Bassins region), remained under water for days after the rains had slowed; there is a risk that standing water will remain with continued rains, creating a risk that water-borne diseases will spread. Support in the form of mosquito nets is also critical to prevent a malaria outbreak (IRIN, 07/08/2015).

WASH: Mobile latrines have been identified as among the main priorities. This is because the worst-affected areas in Ouagadougou are “non-planned” areas of the city where there is no proper sewage system. Potable water is also a main need (IRIN, 07/08/2015).

Protection: Protection support is required for affected populations as many have lost their legal documents, which could prevent them from accessing aid (IRIN, 07/08/2015).

Humanitarian and Operational Constraints

The transitional government sent teams to affected areas to evaluate damage and needs caused by the floods. The mission was temporarily suspended due to security incidents, and authorities have called on populations to be more responsible and facilitate the work of the government teams (Government, 13/08/2015).

Aggravating Factors

Weather

Meteorological services anticipate heavy rains throughout August, which could exacerbate conditions and pose a risk of landslides as grounds are already saturated (local media, 03/08/2015; NOAA, 12/08/2015). Heavy rains had already hit Ouagadougou on 24 June, causing one death and property damage (local media, 24/06/2015).

Political Stability and Security

Burkina Faso has been ruled by a transitional government since November 2014, after demonstrations against then President Blaise Compaoré’s attempt to pass a bill extending his term of office led to his resignation. New presidential and legislative elections are due to take place in October 2015. Political tensions have risen since April when authorities adopted a new electoral code preventing those who supported Compaoré’s bill for a new mandate from participating in the next presidential election (ICG, 24/06/2015; ICG, 03/08/2015). After the Presidential Security Regiment (PSR) accused the Prime Minister of inventing a kidnap plot against himself, they called for his resignation and reshuffled some positions within the transitional government (ICG, 01/08/2015). Political tensions could have an impact on the floods’ response.

Refugees in affected areas

As of 30 June, there are 34,030 refugees in Burkina Faso. 33,700 are Malian refugees, more than half of whom children. 76% of Malian refugees are residing in camps in regions affected by the August floods: Mentao and Goudebou (Sahel region), Bobo Dioulasso (Hauts Bassins region), and Ouagadougou (Central region) (UNHCR, 30/06/2015). Floods in camps could increase the vulnerabilities of refugees.

Food security

During the current June-August lean season, 371,000 people are estimated to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes or above, and 1.2 million in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food security outcomes (WFP/FAO, 31/03/2015). The Sahel and Central-North regions are most affected, but high food insecurity levels are also recorded in the six other regions affected by August floods (OCHA, 12/02/2015). The main harvest, planned for September in all parts of Burkina Faso, could be affected by prolonged rains during the lean season.

Poor households in Oudalan and Soum provinces in the Sahel region have faced Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes since April; food stocks in these areas have been depleted since January due to below-average 2014 harvests and reduced livestock prices. Households have resorted to coping mechanisms such as selling part of their livestock (FEWSNET, 30/04/2015; FEWSNET, 22/05/2015). Rains affecting populations in these areas could reinforce these vulnerabilities.

Other vulnerabilities in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is among the ten poorest countries in the world: as of 2011, it is ranked 181/187 in the human development index (Transparency international, 2015). 80% of its population depends on subsistence farming. Food insecurity is a long standing issue in Burkina Faso and access to basic services, including healthcare, is limited. Diseases such as meningitis, cholera, and yellow fever are endemic, and Ebola could easily spread from neighbouring affected countries if preventive measures are lifted (ECHO, 2015).

Response Capacity

Local and National Response Capacity

CONASUR (National Council for Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation) is handling part of the response. Following the rains, the government issued a warning to people to stay away from known flooding areas and has deployed teams to inform the public in high-risk areas of future flooding, and to evacuate some communities (IRIN, 07/08/2015; local media, 03/08/2015).

The government says it will need approximately CFA 18 billion (USD 30 million) to meet the needs of more than 122,000 people, who might be affected by heavy rains, including 36,000 potentially rendered homeless. The money would be used to distribute 18 tonnes of cereal food aid across 13 regions, as part of an emergency response, as well as tents, blankets and cooking items. The appeal is still pending (IRIN, 07/08/2015; UNICEF, 14/08/2015). As of 12 August, the estimated gap in budget is over CFA 525,367,000 (USD 883,250) (OCHA, 12/08/2015).

International Response Capacity

The November 2014 socio-political crisis severely affected humanitarian structures, in particular for food and education assistance: lootings and fires have led to losses in emergency response goods estimated at around USD 10.7 billion. This has hampered international response capacity and weakened populations' abilities to cope (OCHA, 12/02/2015). OCHA reports that plans are under way to set up a nationwide action plan to help the country better mitigate the impacts of climate change, including heavier rains. Red Cross teams have been trained and set up in each of the 45 provinces of the country and non-food items have been deployed throughout Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso (IRIN, 07/08/2015).

OCHA and UNICEF have supported CONASUR's response to the floods and heavy winds; a joint mission is planned for the week of 24 August to dispatch emergency stocks to most affected areas and to assess additional needs (UNICEF, 14/08/2015). Further details on the ongoing response are lacking.

Information Gaps and Needs

- Detailed assessment of needs of affected populations and ongoing response.
- Assessment of potential long-term impact, including for food security.

Lessons Learned

- Flooding during the lean season can have life-threatening impacts on rural and peri-urban poor populations, increase the risk of waterborne diseases and worsen food security and children's nutritional situations (UNICEF, 2011).
- Unprecedented floods in August and September 2009 killed five and affected more than 150,000 people in Ouagadougou. Considerable losses or damage to household materials, crops, livestock, and basic infrastructure (roads, bridges, factories, hospitals and dams) were recorded. The Government made 93 temporary sites such as schools and public buildings available to host those who could not find accommodation. The situation was dire as most of these sites did not have either the capacity to accommodate the numbers affected or the appropriate facilities. They were also generally located in flood-prone areas. Some improvised sites were created by the affected population while others were still camping at their former homes to look after the remains of their houses (IFRC, 2011). Thousands were asked to quit the camps two months later, with the government designating 15,000 plots of land available and attributing funds to those renting homes and those rebuilding their lost houses due to the flooding. Affected populations said support was insufficient (IRIN, 26/11/2009).
- Between July and September 2010, heavy rainfall also caused major flooding in five of the country's most food-insecure regions, ultimately affecting 140,000 people. Only 14% of the humanitarian needs of affected populations had been met by October 2010, with key sectors like protection and education having yet to receive funding. In addition, limited government resources (human and financial), difficulties in accessing the population before the end of the rainy season, and diminished capacities of health and other delivery systems have made providing aid a challenging task (UNICEF, 2011).
- In the face of climate-related crises, the Burkinabe Government developed numerous policy instruments, planning and action programs that often overlap and for which the implementation capacity is limited. This has been reportedly aggravated by lack of a common vision for all interventions or actions. Working relations between NGOs like the Burkina Faso Red Cross and Catholic Relief Services, and CONASUR have been reported as not good, while CONASUR's own technical capabilities are reportedly limited (GFDRR, 2011). In terms of disaster prevention and management, Burkina Faso adopted a national strategy for disasters humanitarian crises' prevention and management in 2014 (Government, 2014).

Key Characteristics of most affected regions and country

Key indicators	Centre region	Hauts Bassins region	Centre Ouest region	Sahel region
Total population	2,136,581 (49.8% female)	1,718,161 (50.5% female)	1,348,784 (54% female)	1,121,764 (50.3% female)
State capital	Ouagadougou	Bobo-Dioulasso	Koudougou	Dori
Lighting and cooking sources Use of electricity as main lighting source	53.1% of households (2007)	26.6% of households (2007)	8% of households (2007)	3.7% of households (2007)
Health figures				
Access to health centers within 30 min	75.1% of households (2007)	50% of households (2007)	31% of households (2007)	12.7% of households (2007)
Inhabitants per doctor	36,499 inhabitants per doctor (2010)	69,205 inhabitants per doctor (2010)	87,376 inhabitants per doctor (2010)	98,750 inhabitants per doctor (2010)
Infant mortality rate	72 per 100,000 live births (2003)	88 per 100,000 live births (2003)	110 per 100,000 live births (2003)	122 per 100,000 live births (2003)
Food security				
People in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or above food security outcomes ¹	10,608	11,758	28,261	268,304
Nutrition levels				
GAM	49,924	52,590	39,764	46,088
SAM	13,482	20,672	13,525	17,936
Access to market within 30 minutes of their house	80.4% of households (2007)	71.4% of households	47.3% of households	22.1% of households
Literacy rates				
Percentage of people literate	63% (2007)	33.4% (2007)	28.8% (2007)	18% (2007)
Access to primary school within 30 minutes of distance	88.6% of households	74.2% of households	62.9% of households	47.7% of households
Access to secondary school within 30 minutes of distance	71.6% of households	36.2% of households	21.1% of households	3.6% of households

Sources: Government, 2011; OCHA, 12/02/2015

¹ Disaggregated data for food security and nutrition is from the 2015 Strategic Response Plan; numbers are estimated to have increased during the June-August lean season.

Map

Burkina Faso: Overview of people affected by heavy winds and floods (as of 12 August 2015)

