



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ABUJA

PRESS RELEASE

Australia provides a further \$50 million for food security in Africa: Niger a major beneficiary

9 July 2012 – Australia will commit a further \$50 million to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) to address hunger and poverty, making Australia the fifth largest donor to GAFSP. This builds on Australia's previous contribution of \$50 million to GAFSP, and the significant results already achieved through existing programs in Niger, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Togo.

Australia's contribution to GAFSP aims to increase agricultural productivity, nutrition and income generation for more than 7.5 million people, most of whom are concentrated in Africa.

GAFSP is providing a \$33 million grant to support the Government of Niger's project for Water Mobilisation to Increase Food Security, which aims to increase the area of land which is sustainably farmed, reduce post-harvest losses, and increase agricultural and animal productivity in the Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder regions. The project will directly benefit 213,000 people and a further 459,450 will benefit indirectly across the three regions.

"Australia is committed to working with our partners to achieve sustainable, lasting solutions to hunger and poverty. This funding in Niger will contribute to poverty alleviation by boosting rural production and enhancing food security in particularly vulnerable areas", said the Australian Ambassador to Niger H.E. Ian McConville.

Launched in April 2010, GAFSP is a global effort to aid vulnerable populations afflicted by hunger and poverty. It builds on emergency and recovery assistance, targeting transformative and lasting change in agriculture and food security. To date, a total of \$1.1 billion has been pledged to GAFSP by Australia, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and other country donors. Funding is allocated to countries that have innovative and credible plans already in place to improve agricultural productivity and food security.

Nominated as the new Chair of the GAFSP Steering Committee, Australia will work to improve the responsiveness of the fund, encourage quality proposals and attract more donors.

"GAFSP funding complements Australia's broader food security support across West Africa, including a four-year, \$15 million partnership with the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development, of which Niger is a significant beneficiary. Australia is also providing targeted technical assistance to improve water harvesting and conservation technologies in Niger, where activities are strengthening knowledge transfer on improved water management for rain-fed agriculture", said Ambassador McConville.

Australia's efforts to boost long-term agricultural productivity and build resilience complement immediate efforts to respond to the unfolding food security crisis in the Sahel. Australia has so far provided \$30 million in humanitarian funding to the region, making it the fifth largest donor globally, including \$20 million to Niger for urgently needed food, nutrition and other support for affected communities. This is being delivered through our multilateral partners, such as the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, and Australian non-government organisations present on the ground.

Media enquiries: For further information, please contact Ms Mirella Mahlstein Ajibade at the Australian High Commission by email at mirella.mahlstein@dfat.gov.au or +234 9 461 2780.