



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CAFOD responds to Niger's growing food crisis**

#### **For immediate release:**

CAFOD is scaling up its humanitarian response to the massive food shortages and staggering acute malnutrition rates in Niger, by increasing its nutritional support to children and its cash-for-work programme for vulnerable families.

This response comes after the government of Niger has announced that the rate of severe food insecurity in the country has tripled since last year.

The latest statistics from Niger show that nearly 17 per cent of children under five are now suffering from acute malnutrition and life-threatening conditions, over a third higher than the number recorded last year. Government authorities estimate that nearly a million children in Niger are moderately malnourished and another 200,000 have severe acute malnutrition.

The severe food shortages being experienced result from a number of factors, including drought-like conditions, crop failure, pest infestations, increases in food prices and abject levels of poverty, forcing people to leave their homes, and sell or kill their starving livestock. It is estimated that 7.8 million people will be forced to cope without food reserves before the October harvest.

"The situation is not getting any better," said CAFOD's Senior Humanitarian Response Officer, Philippe Mougin, "More people are entering the nutrition centres each week, as families with no other options are going for days without eating."

Mougin has recently returned from Niger, where he was monitoring the logistical and technical support CAFOD is providing to its partners Caritas Niger, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Islamic Relief. Activities currently being run on the ground include cash-for-work programmes and nutritional care for children under five.

Despite the provision of programmes like these, the needs of the most vulnerable in Niger far outstrip available resources. Mougin added: "It is not just about the immediate funding needed to support this crisis, but also planning for the future. CAFOD and its partners are committed to longer-term

programmes that will support families to cope with the repetitive cycle of drought, through better and more sustainable food security, and livelihoods."

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