In the past decade, chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, cyclical drought, locust infestations, seasonal floods, disease outbreaks, and recurrent complex emergencies have presented major challenges to vulnerable populations in the West Africa region. Between FY 2006 and FY 2015, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) have provided humanitarian assistance to address the impacts of a diverse range of crises, including food insecurity and malnutrition in the Sahel; complex emergencies in multiple countries; disease outbreaks, including cholera, meningitis, measles, and Ebola Virus Disease (EVD); a volcano in Cabo Verde; and flooding throughout the region.

Between FY 2006 and FY 2015, USAID provided more than $2.8 billion in humanitarian assistance to West Africa, including more than $1.7 billion from USAID/FFP for food assistance in the form of U.S.-purchased food, locally and/or regionally procured food, cash transfers for food, food vouchers, and related activities. USAID/OFDA provided more than $1.1 billion for agriculture and food security, economic recovery and market systems (ERMS), health, nutrition, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions, as well as support for humanitarian coordination, logistics, and the provision of relief commodities.

Over the last decade, USAID has sent Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) to the region—including to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone during
FY 2014 and FY 2015, as well as Mali in FY 2015, for the EVD outbreak. USAID also sent multiple humanitarian assessment teams to Côte d’Ivoire in FY 2011 following large-scale insecurity and displacement and to the Sahelian countries in FY 2012 in response to food insecurity.

USAID response activities in West Africa focus on meeting immediate needs while supporting recovery activities to build resilience against future crises. To assist conflict-affected populations, USAID supports the provision of food assistance, emergency relief supplies, basic services, and protection activities. Following periods of below-average agricultural yields, droughts, and floods, USAID programs aim to improve livestock health and crop production, strengthen management of acute malnutrition, support livelihoods activities, and improve water and sanitation conditions.

In addition to short-term urgent assistance for vulnerable populations, USAID/OFDA supports national and regional structures to strengthen early warning and response systems. To complement emergency assistance interventions, USAID/OFDA’s West Africa disaster risk reduction strategy seeks to reduce the risks and effects of acute malnutrition, displacement, and epidemics through programs that decrease community and household fragility and increase resilience to future shocks.

Likewise, USAID/FFP supplements its emergency food assistance with development programs that aim to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and increase the resilience of vulnerable populations to cope with future shocks while continuing to meet the immediate needs of affected populations. In West Africa, USAID/FFP development food assistance programs work with communities to improve agricultural productivity, health, and natural resource management; reduce chronic malnutrition; and strengthen local capacity among civil society groups.

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1 FY 2015 figures represent committed or obligated amounts as of September 30, 2015. FY 2015 figures are subject to fluctuation due to end-of-fiscal-year financial review and reconciliation activities. Figures do not include USAID/OFDA disaster preparedness and mitigation assistance provided outside of declared disaster responses or USAID/FFP development assistance.

2 Countries and responses categorized as “Other” have each received less than $1.5 million cumulatively from USAID/OFDA over the past 10 years and include Benin, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, The Gambia, and Togo, as well as a regional locust emergency.

3 Countries categorized as “Other” each received less than $20 million cumulatively from USAID/FFP over the past 10 years and include Benin, Guinea, Senegal, and The Gambia.

4 Chart does not include disaster preparedness and mitigation assistance, administrative support costs, or funding that cannot be categorized by sector due to changes to the USAID/OFDA accounting system that occurred during the decade covered by this document.