



## Staying Ahead of the Curve in the Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Side event on the margins of the Second Regular Session of the Executive Board

**Thursday, 29 November, 8:45–9:15 (with 8:30 welcome coffee)**

Aula I, Aula Delegatis, WFP Headquarters

### Context

The humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is deepening. A key indicator is that food insecurity has almost doubled, from **7.7 million** people in 2017 to **13.1 million** in 2018. These people live in food security crisis or emergency, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Furthermore, **4.6 million children**, are malnourished, among whom **2.2 million** severely malnourished. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is also facing a serious food deficit due to multiple compounding factors linked to **conflict, prolonged displacement and agricultural pests**. This deficit of 7 million tons of food, equivalent to 22 percent of the overall food requirements, places more than 20 million people at risk of hunger.

In addition, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is concurrently facing the worst Ebola virus disease epidemic in its history in the highly populated and conflict-affected provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, which are home to more than **10 million people**. As of 13 November, **333** confirmed Ebola cases and **209** confirmed deaths had been reported. The response to the Ebola virus disease epidemic is severely hampered by a highly volatile security environment posing severe access constraints for responders. Community engagement and sensitization on Ebola awareness and vaccination activities continue amidst community resistance to the response. Despite concerted response efforts, the epidemic is still not under control and the risk for further spread within the country and across borders to neighbouring countries remains very high. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)<sup>1</sup> the epidemic is in a critical phase and has the potential to become endemic in the long-term.

Finally, the number of displaced people remains high and could increase further due to the potential violence associated with upcoming presidential elections scheduled for December 2018. Large numbers of returnees have also been reported in South Kivu, Tanganyika and the greater Kasai region, many of whom require urgent humanitarian assistance. The recent influx of an estimated **350,000** Congolese people expelled from Angola to the Kasai region could destabilize the region during a precarious recovery from conflict.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2018/11/05/cdc-director-warns-that-congos-ebola-outbreak-may-not-be-containable/>

## WFP Response

- From January–October 2018, **WFP has significantly ramped up its emergency response to the hunger and malnutrition crisis, reaching 4 million people in the six provinces covered by the Level 3 (L3) corporate emergency response. This accounts for 74 percent of the 5.4 million targeted by WFP in 2018.**
- Since August 2018, WFP has provided food and nutrition assistance to more than **50,000 Ebola affected people**. WFP is also using its **logistical expertise** to support WHO, the Ministry of Health and other partners in the medical response. With the request from the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to scale down its presence in the country after the elections, for eventual withdrawal in 2020, WFP may be called up to further scale up its operations in 2019 to address emerging gaps.

## Objectives

- To **alert Member States** of the worsening humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo related to increasing food insecurity, an Ebola virus disease epidemic which is not yet under control, and potential political instability.
- To **activate an urgent call** to action to prepare for what could represent a perfect humanitarian storm in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## Agenda

The discussion will be opened by Mr Davide Beasley, WFP Executive Director, who will be joined by a panel of speakers including:

- Ms Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Assistant Executive Director, Operations Services, will provide a broad overview of the crisis;
- Mr Amer Daoudi, WFP Senior Director of Operations, will touch upon the multiple stress points facing the country;
- Mr Claude Jibidar, WFP Country Director in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will elaborate on WFP achievements to date, gaps, challenges and priorities in 2019.

A question and answer session will follow the presentations.

## Proposed participation

The session will be open to all delegations and partners and interpretation will be provide.