

Highlights

COVID-19 is deepening global food insecurity, as the **economic impact** of pandemic exacerbates **expected seasonal natural hazards** and **pre-existing food security challenges**. WFP has mobilized in response, including supporting more than 500,000 people affected by COVID-19 in the host community in Cox's Bazar, **Bangladesh**; providing food assistance to 20,000 households immobilised by COVID-19 in Conakry, **Guinea**; and reaching 559,000 learners in **Malawi** with take-home school meals.

Resourcing remains the primary challenge to WFP's ability to scale up and wage a global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The WFP Global Response to COVID-19 plan remains significantly underfunded, with USD 750 million in contributions against the required USD 4.9 billion. Likewise, WFP's Global Common Services face significant funding shortfalls, with USD 207.6 million mobilized against the USD 965 million requirement.

Following the cataclysmic **blast in Beirut**, WFP is working around the clock to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. WFP's first shipment of **12,500 metric tonnes of wheat flour** arrived in Beirut on Tuesday 18 August; WFP has also procured **150,000 food parcels to distribute to families** impacted by the explosion, economic crisis and COVID-19. Health officials have warned that **the chaos caused by the explosion risks accelerating the spread of COVID-19**; on 17 August, Lebanon registered a record high number of new daily cases and imposed a two-week lockdown starting 21 August.

On the ground in Beirut, [WFP Executive Director David Beasley](#) said:

"This is a country that was already devastated because of economic deterioration, the war in Syria, COVID on top of all of that, and now, this explosion. It's very critical that we get this operation up immediately – and we're going to do that. We're going to do what we can to provide the food that's necessary in the short term, and get the port operating so we can provide support to the millions of people that are going to need help here in Lebanon."



WFP Executive Director David Beasley surveys damage to the port in Beirut, Lebanon.

Globally, **increased needs are stable** at around **USD 1.8 billion** for July to December, a 29 percent increase compared to what was planned before the pandemic. The biggest relative increases are from Regional Bureau Panama, Regional Bureau Bangkok, Regional Bureau Johannesburg, the crisis response focus area, and the cash-based transfer modality.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Asia and the Pacific: The number of COVID-19 cases in the Asia-Pacific countries where WFP works now exceeds 3.2 million, up from 1.5 million one month ago. WFP is scaling up significantly in **Afghanistan** and **Bangladesh**. In **Afghanistan**, WFP plans to assist an additional 3 million people impacted by COVID-19 with food and cash transfers during the second half of 2020. In **Bangladesh**, WFP will support 1.1 million more people through the development of urban safety nets in at-risk, low-income urban slums in Dhaka and Chittagong Hill Tracts, and by expanding in-kind food and cash transfers to vulnerable host communities in Cox's Bazaar.



[WFP responds to coronavirus-driven urban hunger in Dhaka, Bangladesh](#)

WFP is providing cash assistance as lockdown measures exacerbate poverty in one of the world's most populous and densely populated cities.

East Africa: The combined socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, flooding and locusts are exacerbating prevailing food insecurity and undermining livelihoods and development. WFP has adjusted its existing programmes and worked closely with governments to meet the increased food needs of the most vulnerable people affected by pandemic, particularly urban populations. In **Kenya**, WFP has launched its urban response in Nairobi's informal settlements and released the first and second tranches of cash-based transfers to 27,270 households out of a targeted 70,500 households in informal urban settlements.

Latin America and the Caribbean: COVID-19 cases are soaring in Latin America, the region most impacted globally, accounting for over a quarter of the world's cases. WFP is prepositioning staff and food for the 2020 hurricane season, which is expected to be more active than normal. In **Bolivia**, protests and road blockades have disrupted supply chains across the country. In **Colombia**, WFP continues to identify, prioritize and address new COVID-19 related needs, while continuing its migration response, supporting over 250,000 migrants and host communities on average every month.

Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa: Pressure on food prices remains high in countries that were already facing economic crises before the COVID-19 pandemic, including **Lebanon**, **Sudan**, **Syria** and **Yemen**. In response to the Beirut explosions in **Lebanon**, WFP is moving to stabilize the price of bread, rehabilitate the port and is planning to scale up cash-based transfer assistance.

Livelihood activities are gradually resuming in countries such as **Iraq** where the governments have begun easing restrictions in strict compliance with health safety measures.

Southern Africa: The number of COVID-19 cases in the region continues to accelerate, crossing the half million mark since the beginning of August. As joblessness has soared, remittances from wage earners in South Africa and elsewhere, vital for millions in **Zimbabwe**, **Malawi**, **Mozambique** and **Lesotho**, have drastically fallen. WFP has initiated or is planning sizeable cash transfer programmes for poor people in urban areas in several countries, including in the **Republic of the Congo**, where WFP is working to assist 35,000 severely food insecure people in Brazzaville with mobile money transfers.

West and Central Africa: The region continues to grapple with the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic, deteriorating security situations and flooding adversely affecting refugees and internally displaced persons. WFP is providing food assistance to people with COVID-19 and under quarantine in **Central African Republic**, **Guinea** and **Sierra Leone**. WFP is also supporting national governments' social protection responses and safety nets, by planning to implement a social protection response with UNICEF through cash delivery and systems strengthening in **Mauritania**, **Mali** and **Niger**.

More details can be found in the [Regional Updates](#) below.



Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

With global recorded COVID-19 cases topping 22 million, **resourcing remains the primary impediment challenging WFP's ability to scale up and wage a global response to the pandemic.** The WFP Global Response to COVID-19 plan, issued 29 June, **remains significantly underfunded**, with only USD 750 million in resources mobilized against the required USD 4.9 billion. Several operations face enormous resourcing constraints, among them in contexts where WFP is responding to needs across larger operations in **Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Mozambique, Nigeria, Syria, South Sudan, Yemen and Zimbabwe.**

To minimise the impact on humanitarian operations, WFP continues to deploy its logistics capacity and expertise to support health and humanitarian partners as they respond to not only the global health response to COVID-19, but also to existing humanitarian crises around the world. However, as with WFP's global response plan, WFP's **global Common Services face significant funding shortfalls.** To date, USD 207.6 million has been mobilized against the USD 965 million requirement.

Passenger numbers continue to rise as more destinations are added to WFP's flight network, and requests to transport cargo are increasing as supplies come online. While a recent reduction in market rates has meant that resources can now be contracted at lower cost than a few months ago, enabling the extension of both cargo and passenger services for an additional few weeks beyond the previous July deadline, **funding is still urgently required to enable WFP to maintain its vital logistics support beyond August.** With the pandemic showing no signs of slowing down, and worrying accelerations of infections noted in vulnerable regions, it is crucial that the response continues when it is needed the most.

WFP Operations

Globally, **increased needs are stable** at around **USD 1.8 billion** for July to December, a 29 percent increase compared to what was planned before the pandemic. The biggest relative increases are from Regional Bureau Panama, Regional Bureau Bangkok, Regional Bureau Johannesburg, the crisis response focus area, and the cash-based transfer modality. Dedicated support is being provided to several countries that are facing major increases in needs amid lack of resources.

68 budget revisions have been submitted as of 12 August, **37 of which are fully or partially related to COVID-19.** The total budgetary increase of all budget revisions linked to COVID-19 is over USD 1 billion; the total direct beneficiary increase for all budget revisions linked to COVID-19 is over 10 million.

WFP'S GLOBAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Reaching excluded groups is a key piece of WFP's scale-up across regions to address COVID-19. WFP is particularly concerned for already food-insecure populations in rural and urban areas who were not receiving assistance due to access or resource constraints, as well as refugee and migrant populations who largely rely on the informal sector for income and are often excluded under national social protection schemes.

Coronavirus exacerbates indigenous peoples' historic vulnerabilities

COVID-19 is making it increasingly difficult for tens of millions of indigenous people to put food on the table, exacerbated their vulnerability. In response, WFP is providing food assistance to help indigenous communities get through the pandemic.

In the Amazonas region of Colombia, WFP led an emergency mission in early June targeting 5,000 indigenous people. In the Uru Murato community in the Bolivian highlands, WFP provided food assistance for the first time to 238 people who decided to self-isolate.

And in the Republic of Congo, WFP provided more than 1,600 indigenous children with take-home rations to ensure they do not miss out on the calories and nutrients they need to thrive.

COVID-19 response aside, WFP has been working to improve the food security, nutrition and resilience of indigenous communities. "Leaving no one behind also requires that WFP's future programming is firmly grounded in the participation and agency of indigenous communities, as well as in the protection of their rights," explains Anne-Laure Duval, WFP's Protection Team Lead.



WFP is continuing to expand assistance in **urban areas** given the urban dimension of COVID-19-induced vulnerability and the impact that lockdown and movement restrictions have on urban communities. In **Zambia**, WFP has started implementing cash-based transfers targeting 180,000 people in disadvantaged, high-density and low-income urban and peri-urban areas.

WFP is also providing **one-off emergency assistance** to ease the impact of lockdowns on vulnerable groups, including **people in quarantine**. In **Syria**, in cooperation with WHO, WFP has started a six-month institutional feeding programme for vulnerable Syrians in quarantine centres. As of early August, WFP had assisted more than 4,300 people through ready-to-eat rations and bread in four quarantine centres in rural Damascus, Deir Ezzor, and Tartous governorates.

WFP is continuing to enable the scale-up of **cash-based transfers**, notably in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa, where cash-based transfers amount to 53 percent of all interventions carried out by WFP – the highest percentage of any WFP region. The number of retailers involved in WFP’s cash-based transfer operations in the region has almost doubled from over 700 shops at the start of 2019 to over 1,300 shops by July 2020.

Through its triple role as a technical advisor, service provider and complementary actor, WFP is now supporting around **50 governments** as they introduce new, strengthen and/or adapt their existing **social protection measures** in response to COVID-19. In **Liberia**, WFP is supporting the government’s COVID-19 support programme by distributing 30-day food rations to up to 2.5 million vulnerable and food insecure people and frontline workers.

In all countries WFP continues to **leverage its platforms** to deliver health messages and enable the COVID-19 response. In **Bangladesh**, WFP and several other agencies are continuing to engage refugees in Cox’s Bazar in mask production, with 143,000 masks produced for the refugee population. In **Algeria**, a local TV show produced by refugees and broadcast across the camps on local TV is providing cautionary messages on COVID-19 and delivers tips on healthy eating to boost immune systems.



[Schools, health and nutrition — why coronavirus demands a rethink of education](#)

WFP is seeking to minimize the impact of the pandemic on a generation of students. WFP and UNICEF have partnered to advocate for a safe reopening of schools in the poorest countries and to reach 10 million of the most vulnerable children with health and nutrition packages

SECURITY

There continue to be few COVID-19-related impacts on security operations. **Twenty countries** are of **medium concern for security due to COVID impacts on civil unrest, crime, armed conflict**, spread across all WFP regions, with no change since the previous reporting period. Given the massive explosions in **Lebanon** causing multiple casualties and extensive damage, it will remain On Watch for the security situation evolving in the next two weeks.

COVID-19 remains only one of multiple factors influencing the security environment in most WFP operating contexts. Signs of mounting civil unrest are visible, and armed conflict continues unabated - sometimes exacerbated by COVID-19 factors - while political instability destabilizes the WFP operating environment in several countries.

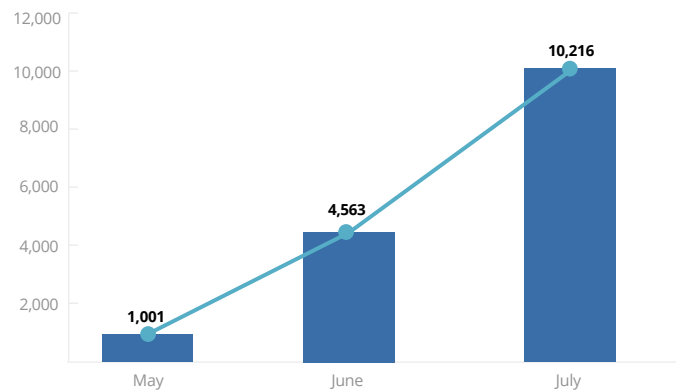
Common Services

On 5 August, WFP made its first flight in the Latin American region between Mexico City, **Mexico** and Bogota, **Colombia**, marking an important milestone in its air passenger operations. Additional flights in the region have now come online including for Panama and Port-au-Prince, providing a valuable connection into the continent for health and humanitarian responders.

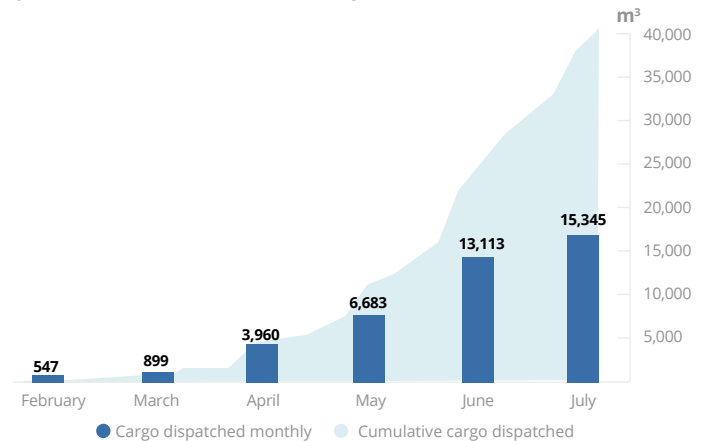
WFP continues to provide vital air links to destinations throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East and Commonwealth of Independent States countries, with **60 destinations** now served. Since launching in May, **19,915 passengers from 306 organizations** have taken WFP flights, with the service providing a vital means for health and humanitarian workers to make it to the frontlines of the COVID-19 response.

Monthly Passenger Trend, 1 May - 31 July 2020

Passenger Number



Monthly Cargo Dispatch Trend, 1 February - 31 July 2020 (BSP, UNHRD, Free-to-User)



In line with its mandate to fill gaps in commercial transport markets rather than replace commercial capacity, WFP continues to monitor availability of safe and reliable commercial access to the countries it serves and where this becomes available, stands down its own passenger services. WFP air passenger services have already ceased to 25 destinations and the final rotation between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa will take place on 28 August. Immediate actions will be taken to reinstate Global Passenger Service flights should commercial flights be disrupted again.

Supply chain disruptions caused by COVID-19 and the measures put in place by governments to contain the spread of the virus put the continuation of health and humanitarian programmes at risk and severely complicated the immediate health response required to address the pandemic. To ensure the continued delivery of critical health and other humanitarian items, WFP rapidly leveraged its extensive logistics network to establish eight humanitarian response hubs, and the accompanying airlinks between them, dedicated to the COVID-19 response. WFP staff in these hubs have been working around the clock to ensure these essential goods can get to where they are needed, and volumes dispatched are only increasing. **June and July each saw more than twice as much cargo transported as was in May.** To date, a total of **48,676 m³** of cargo has been dispatched on behalf of **51 organizations** to **165 countries** – enough cargo to fill over **19 Olympic-sized swimming pools**.

To ensure that the personnel of UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) can stay and deliver as part of the COVID-19 response, it is essential to ensure that these front-line workers have access to medical care in case of infection, but also that this does not cause an additional strain on the host countries' medical facilities, depleting already stretched resources needed for the national population. To support this essential mandate, WFP is utilizing its access to a global network of contracted air ambulances and its experience in carrying out medical evacuations to co-lead the aviation arm of the UN Medevac Cell together with UN Department of Operational Support (DOS), out of the Strategic Air Operations Centre in Brindisi, Italy. **The Cell has completed a total of 56 MedEvacs - 39 carried out by WFP and 17 by UNDOS** - since its roll out on 22 May.

To learn more about WFP's common services in support of the health and humanitarian response to COVID-19, read the latest publications [here](#).

WFP-led and co-led Clusters

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)

In **Bangladesh**, the ETS is coordinating the provision of critical data connectivity services in 20 Severe Acute Respiratory Infection treatment centres and Isolation and Treatment Centres to support the response to COVID-19.

In the **Central African Republic**, the dedicated COVID-19 call centre set up by the ETC in Bangui continues to provide 24/7 support and advice on COVID-19-related issues to affected communities. Operators refer suspected cases of the virus to the Ministry of Health. The ETC is in the process of recruiting one IT manager to oversee the call centre management system.

In **Libya**, between 1-7 August, 130 calls were received by the ETS-managed Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) call centre in Tripoli. Of these, 42 per cent were related to humanitarian issues and 58 per cent were related to COVID-19. In the majority of COVID-19-related calls, callers asked for information, such as awareness messages, useful contact numbers, and the location of emergency centres. Operators provided official guidelines and referred those with COVID-19 symptoms to the National Centre for Disease Control.

In **Yemen**, the ETC has extended connectivity services to a designated quarantine centre in Al Hudaydah. The ETC in Yemen continues to prepare to set up two COVID-19 hotlines in Sana'a and Aden for the Ministry of Public Health and Population.

Logistics Cluster

The Gaps and Needs Analyses for **Honduras** (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)) and **Ecuador** (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)) have been published. These assessments have been conducted remotely in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to provide guidance on the most efficient logistics coordination mechanisms to address the current constraints faced by in-country responders.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the Logistics Cluster is facilitating partners' access to free-to-user logistics services in Kinshasa and Goma for COVID-19 response activities, including road transport inside the cities, such as airport, port, warehouses and health facilities, and temperature-controlled warehousing.

In **Syria**, the transshipment hub at Bab al Hawa border crossing will increase its capacity from 22 trucks per convoy to 27 trucks per convoy. In order to ensure continued effective implementation of physical distancing, the hub will be expanded in size.

Regional Updates

Regional Bureau Bangkok

The number of COVID-19 cases in Asia-Pacific countries of WFP operations (including oversight countries) now exceeds 3.2 million, up from 1.5 million one month ago. **WFP is supporting governments to address the impact of COVID-19 through national social protection systems;** basic service delivery; analysis of food systems, food security and nutrition; emergency relief; and humanitarian common services. COVID-19 is compounding the risks already faced in many parts of the region due to escalating conflict and climate. Preparations for heavy rain and the upcoming winter are even more difficult than usual and funding is stretched for critical operations such as Myanmar and Afghanistan.

WFP activities in Asia-Pacific have been modified to continue lifesaving relief assistance while avoiding unnecessary exposure to risks of infection. **WFP is also providing general food assistance to support government quarantine measures in Myanmar, Laos and Nepal.**

WFP has adjusted **nutrition-specific and -sensitive interventions** across the region to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. In **Nepal**, for instance, WFP has begun distributing specialized nutritious products initially targeting 20,000 beneficiaries, including children aged 6-23 months, pregnant and lactating women (PLW), elderly people in isolation facilities, and other groups vulnerable to COVID-19. In **Bangladesh**, WFP and other agencies are continuing to engage refugees in Cox's Bazar in mask production, with 143,000 masks produced for the refugee population.

While thousands of **schools across the region are closed**, WFP has adjusted its programmes to reach over 800,000 children with **take-home rations or cash-based transfers in Cambodia, Laos, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, Myanmar and Sri Lanka**. In the Pacific, WFP launched a new humanitarian air service for countries and territories of the Pacific Islands. The first flight, from Fiji to Papua New Guinea, was completed on 06 August and delivered 4 mt of essential medical supplies that will be used in the Government of Papua New Guinea's response to COVID-19.

Significant scale-up is under way for Afghanistan and Bangladesh. In **Bangladesh**, WFP will support 1.1 million more people through the development of urban safety nets in at-risk, low-income urban slums in Dhaka and Chittagong Hill Tracts, and through expansion of in-kind food and cash transfers to vulnerable host communities in Cox's Bazaar. In **Afghanistan**, WFP plans to assist an additional 3 million people impacted by COVID-19 with food and cash transfers during the second half of 2020. The COVID-response focuses on urban poor households to complement WFP's regular programming which primarily targets households in rural areas.

There are almost 1 million reported cases of COVID-19 within the countries in which WFP is active in the region. There has been a 40 percent increase in cases over the last month between July and August. According to a recent WFP analysis, pressure on food prices remains high in the countries of the region that have been facing economic crises even before COVID-19 pandemic. The market status in **Lebanon, Sudan** and **Syria** is at “crisis” level and the cost of the food basket in these countries more than doubled since June 2019. Livelihood activities are gradually resuming in countries such as Iraq and Lebanon where the governments have begun easing restrictions. WFP is recommencing activities while adhering to strict health safety measures.

Nutrition activities in the region are ongoing in line with COVID-19 precautionary guidance. In **Kyrgyzstan**, educational materials on healthy nutrition and lifestyles were developed for grades 3-4 for use at primary schools in the country. In **Algeria**, a local TV show produced by refugees and broadcast across the camps on local TV provides cautionary messages on COVID-19 and delivers tips on healthy eating to boost the immune system, including advice on cooking methods, the nutrient content of various foods, and which foods to avoid.

While **schools remain closed in the region** for summer holidays, **WFP continues its school feeding programmes through alternative modalities.** In **Sudan**, the roll-out of take-home rations instead of on-site school meals has been completed in two states (Kassala, Red Sea) and started in six states (throughout Darfur, and Blue Nile). It is expected that two additional states (North and South Kordofan) will start deliveries in the coming week. In **Armenia**, to support children who cannot receive their nutritious school meals due to school closures, WFP jointly with the Government continues to work on shock responsive school feeding. WFP has transferred USD 487,000 to the Government to support some 29,200 primary school children.

Cash-based transfers amount to 53 percent of all interventions carried out by WFP in the region.

This is the highest percentage of WFP globally, with food assistance generally being the main activity across the different countries. The number of retailers involved in cash-based transfer operations in the region has almost doubled from over 700 shops at the start of 2019 to over 1,300 shops by July 2020. Countries in the region are struggling with economic crises, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In **Lebanon**, the ongoing financial crisis is eroding the value of cash transfers to beneficiaries as the Lebanese pound continues to weaken against the US Dollar. Notably, an estimated 1.2 million refugees are living below the survival minimum expenditure basket in Lebanon.

According to a recent analysis by WFP, **pressure on prices remains high** in countries of the region that have been facing **economic crises** before the COVID-19 pandemic, such as Sudan and Lebanon. In **Lebanon**, the recent explosions in Beirut port on 4 August and the resulting destruction of infrastructure could result in a further increase of food prices, as imports are impacted. Full assessments are underway. In June, annual headline inflation in **Sudan** was as high as 136 percent (up 19 percent compared to May 2020). In terms of the cost of a food basket, the highest monthly increases were reported by Syria (48 percent), followed by Lebanon (34 percent) and Sudan (26.9 percent). Levels of poor and borderline food consumption significantly increased among displaced households: in June around 40 percent of the IDPs in Syria and Yemen were consuming an inadequate diet, the highest percentage recorded in 2020. In Iraq, access to food decreased for 3 out of 5 women, making them more prone to food insecurity.

WFP is continuously working with UN agencies and other partners to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. WFP is actively involved in COVID-19 response coordination with the humanitarian country teams in the region and in the development of contingency plans. As part of the Health Sector-led response to COVID-19 in Syria, WFP, in cooperation and coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO) has started a six-month institutional feeding programme whereby WFP is providing food assistance support to vulnerable Syrians in COVID-19 quarantine centres.

**Regional Bureau
Dakar**

The region continues to grapple with the pandemic, with deteriorating security situations and flooding adversely affecting vulnerable communities. COVID-19 continues to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities across the Sahel region amid the lean season in June, affecting food production, seasonal remittances, resulting in loss of incomes in food vending, trade and informal activities. Moreover, heavy rains and floods have hampered road access, inundated refugee and internally displaced person sites in the Sahel and Nigeria. In addition, security incidents were reported in the **Central Sahel, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Guinea and Nigeria** impacting civilians, security forces, internally displaced persons camps and humanitarian workers. In West Africa, some 57.6 million people are projected to need food assistance by the end of 2020, an increase of 135 percent compared to pre-COVID estimates.

In response, **WFP is planning to scale up its urban programming** to mitigate hunger needs, **support national social protection programmes**, and provide **food assistance to quarantined and isolation affected families** in West Africa. Further, WFP is also conducting vulnerability assessments in urban and peri-urban settlements to reach households at risk food insecurity in **Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania and Sierra Leone**.

WFP is **providing food assistance to COVID-19 patients and quarantined people** in **Central African Republic, Guinea and Sierra Leone**. In Guinea, WFP is providing this assistance in line with the national strategy “STOP COVID-19 in 60 days” launched in June and targeting 3,000 households affected by the pandemic in Conakry. WFP Guinea is also planning to target an additional 20,000 households in Conakry. In **Nigeria**, distribution of food assistance through in-kind and CBTs in urban areas started in July. COVID-19 scale up plan in the North-East targeting 1.9 million people is also being planned.

In the region, WFP is supporting national government social protection responses and safety nets. WFP is planning to implement a social protection response with UNICEF through cash delivery and systems strengthening in **Mauritania, Mali and Niger**. In addition, WFP in **Burkina Faso and Liberia** plans to support the Government’s social protection response in collaboration with the World Bank. Further, WFP Liberia continues to support the Government’s COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme (COHFSP) which started in late May, by distributing a 30-day food ration to up to 2.5 million vulnerable and food insecure people and frontline workers. Relatedly, WFP **Gambia** continues to support to the Government’s one-time COVID-19 food distribution initiated in May targeting 733,000 food insecure people for two months. Meanwhile in **Guinea Bissau**, WFP is preparing for the implementation of social protection cash transfer to reach 1,500 vulnerable households to meet needs during the lean season for three months from August-October.

Country offices have initiated lean season responses in **Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal**. WFP **Guinea** launched on 15 July a 16 months long project targeting 100,000 food insecure people (20,000 households) over a three-month period starting mid-August.

**Regional Bureau
Johannesburg**

While there are early, but not conclusive, indications of the rate of infections slowing down in parts of Southern Africa – notably in some regions of South Africa – the spread is still accelerating overall, further exacerbating the economic effects of the pandemic.

While improved harvests in several countries (South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi) are bringing some relief, especially in rural areas, **food insecurity is set to deteriorate significantly**. WFP analysis indicates that at least 42 million people will need food assistance in the next 12 months in the 12 countries of operation. In a worst-case scenario, the number could reach 52 million, 90 percent compared to the pre-COVID-19 projection of 27.5 million people. The Southern African Development Community has also stressed that the number of food insecure is likely to increase significantly as COVID-19 progressively impacts the urban poor.

Key **sources of income for families, communities and Governments have disappeared or substantially diminished**. As joblessness has soared, **remittances** from wage earner in South Africa and elsewhere, **vital for millions in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Lesotho**, have **drastically fallen**. The **prices of exports** that some countries heavily depend on – oil for the **Republic of Congo** and **Angola**, copper for **Zambia** – **have plunged**. Throughout the region, the all-important tourism industry has ground to a halt.

Regional Bureau Johannesburg

The pandemic has spurred an **intensification of conflict** in eastern DRC and particularly in northern Mozambique where in recent weeks insurgents attacked and occupied the strategic port city of Mocímboa da Praia in Cabo Delgado province. In Zimbabwe, with a crumbling economy, an undercurrent of popular dissent appears to have been stifled amid government imposed COVID-19 restrictions.

Over the past few months, **WFP has reinforced existing activities** while adjusting programmes to a new reality. It has initiated or plans sizeable cash transfer programmes for poor people in urban areas in several countries: Zimbabwe, Zambia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Malawi, the Republic of Congo, DRC, Lesotho and Eswatini.

Following a first phase supporting 75,000 people, WFP in the **Republic of Congo** has started the second phase of its COVID-19 response, aiming to assist 35,000 severely food insecure people in three arrondissements of Brazzaville via mobile money transfers at the equivalent of USD 17 per person per month. The plan also envisages assisting 75,000 children as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women in health centres in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire to prevent and treat moderate acute malnutrition following increasing levels of malnutrition.

As in other parts of Southern Africa, Angola has seen **rising levels of malnutrition**. As part of a broader agreement with the Government, WFP will support the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition in Luanda province through training of health providers and procurement of ready-to-use supplementary food benefiting 37,000 acutely malnourished children under the age of five.

Regional Bureau Nairobi

In East Africa, the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, floods and locusts risk exacerbating prevailing food insecurity and undermine livelihoods and development gains made over the years. Refugees, internally displaced persons and urban populations are of significant concern. **WFP estimates that the number of acutely food insecure people in East Africa could increase by 73 percent – from 24 million pre-COVID-19 to 41.5 million before the end of 2020.** In response, WFP has adjusted existing programmes and worked closely with national governments to meet the increased food security needs of the vulnerable populations affected by the pandemic. In addition, **WFP plans to assist an additional 3.9 million people in 2020 affected by the pandemic, bringing the total number of people assisted by WFP this year to 25 million. To meet their food and nutrition needs over the next six months, WFP requires over USD 1.1 billion.**

WFP has adjusted its existing programmes and worked closely with governments to meet the **increased food needs of the most vulnerable people affected by pandemic** particularly **urban populations** in Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Juba, Mogadishu, Kampala and other cities in the region. Further, UN Habitat and WFP completed a [joint analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on food security of the urban population](#), projecting 14 million facing levels of food insecurity in urban settings in East Africa. In response, WFP is supporting the scaling up and expanding social protection and safety net mechanisms – the preferred approach of governments. Meanwhile, **WFP Kenya has launched its urban response in Nairobi's informal settlements** and released the first and second tranches of cash-based transfers to 27,270 households out of a targeted 70,500 households in the informal urban settlements. This support will continue for three months and will contribute to 50 percent of the minimum food basket.

WFP also aims to sustain critical support in South Sudan and Somalia and refugee communities. Assistance to refugee is prioritised across the countries, and in countries where cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in the refugee camps, WFP is providing additional support to refugees in quarantine and isolation centres.

WFP is actively engaged in assessments and analysis for evidence-based programming and to track the impacts of COVID-19 on Food Security and Markets and to inform on targeting approaches. **WFP has scaled up remote approaches and is working with a number of stakeholders** to facilitate mobile phone-based surveys for **desert locust assessments** (with FAO) and Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis including in **urban areas** (with FAO, UNICEF, and governments).

Regional Bureau Panama

As coronavirus cases continue to surge, Latin America has become the region most impacted by COVID-19 globally, accounting for over a quarter of the world's cases. The health pandemic is driving hunger and food insecurity, which risks fuelling conflict and political unrest, forcing vulnerable families to migrate. Following his trip to **Ecuador** and **Panama**, the Executive Director issued a statement outlining that [more than 11 million people in Latin America are "marching towards the brink of starvation"](#).

Civil unrest remains a prevalent security threat in the region. Protests were reported in **Honduras**, **Bolivia**, **Panama**, **Colombia** and **Haiti** with demands ranging from government inability to contain the outbreaks in respective countries to political issues. Several countries extended pandemic-related preventive measures such as Bolivia and Colombia. In **Bolivia**, protests have [escalated](#) since 03 August, following the decision by Bolivia's Supreme Electoral Tribunal to formally approve the new electoral calendar postponing elections to 18 October. The [road blockades](#) have hampered transportation of basic commodities, medical supplies and humanitarian assistance amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Research, Assessment and Monitoring Unit continues to support several evaluations and studies being conducted in the region and Social Protection continues to support several studies that have previously been mentioned. In addition, there is an ongoing study on social protection for **Venezuelan** migrants in the context of COVID 19 with UNICEF, and the International Policy Group for Inclusive Growth.

Operations continue to expand and adapt across the region. Cash-based transfer technical assistance is being provided to **Dominican Republic**, **Peru** and **El Salvador**. In **El Salvador**, one of the most affected countries, food assistance for 3,000 COVID-19 affected families has concluded and assistance to 57,000 people is ongoing. In **Haiti**, 22,500 people were assisted during the week of 3 August in Artibonite, finalizing the assistance in this area. Food insecurity remains a key concern in the revised Humanitarian Response Plan, with 4.1 million people facing acute food insecurity (IPC 3 and 4), of whom 1.56 million are targeted for assistance. There are 5.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance overall. In **Bolivia**, where there are 90,000 COVID-19 confirmed cases, roadblocks to the main cities are disrupting the supply chain of food, medicine and oxygen and the government announced that the country is in an imminent disaster situation and is requesting the international community's assistance. In **Colombia**, WFP continues to ensure assistance to the most vulnerable, including migrants and identifying and prioritizing new COVID-19 related needs and temporarily addressing them, while continuing its migration response, supporting over 250,000 migrants and host communities on average every month. WFP is also preparing to support the Colombian Government on the implementation of its contact tracing and selective isolation strategy to curb the spread of COVID-19. The strategy will ensure food security for isolated populations and WFP aims at supporting 100,000 people.

In **Guatemala**, the Ministry of Education highlighted the importance of school feeding as a social protection mechanism in pandemic times and requested international cooperation to support fundraising efforts. In **Bolivia**, the government closed the 2020 school year due to challenges in providing effective online education and the rise in new COVID-19 infections. WFP is working on extending its support to local farmers in Sucre, to increase the cultivated land and reduce food insecurity in the region. A project to support migrants jointly with IOM and UNHCR has been presented to the Resident Coordinator Office. In **Colombia**, the school year closure was announced, bringing an end of take-home rations.

Preparedness measures for the 2020 hurricane season in the Atlantic, which is expected to be more active than normal, are ongoing. However, in case of a sudden onset emergency, the Supply Chain division has confirmed there are no available food supply agreements for food kits in the region. In the case of **Dominican Republic**, the Atlantic hurricane season was upgraded to an extremely active hurricane season.