



Women line-up for verification on food distribution day. Mora, Far North region in Cameroon. WFP/Glory Ndaka.

Highlights

- Revised food security estimates for West Africa indicate that COVID-19's compounded impact could drive a further increase in the number of food insecure people, from 24.5 million people pre-COVID-19 to 57.5 million by the end of 2020 (135 percent increase).
- As the food security situation worsens, WFP and UNICEF had also estimated that the number of children with acute malnutrition will increase from an initial figure of 9.7 million to 11.6 million by the end of the year (18 percent increase).
- From an approximately 13.4 million beneficiaries planned before COVID-19 emergency, WFP plans to reach an additional 8.9 million beneficiaries in the region for the second half of 2020, totaling 22.3 million people.
- The revised 2020 budget amounts to USD 1.15 billion and the six-months net funding requirements (July-December 2020) are USD 770 million, representing 67 percent of overall requirements. Overall, 14 out of 19 country offices in the region are reporting shortfalls of above 50 percent of their six-month requirements, including all the Level 2 and Level 3 emergency countries (Central Sahel, Cameroon, CAR, and Nigeria).
- Prioritized life-saving activities are ongoing, in line with COVID-19 preventive measures set up, as well as critical technical support to Governments and partners. Meanwhile, resilience and school feeding activities remain suspended in most of the country offices if not reoriented. In a number of countries however, school feeding activities have gradually resumed, with the partial or full reopening of schools (in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea).
- Country offices in the region, such as Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal are scaling up cash-based transfers (CBTs), linked in part to the higher urban nature of the COVID-19 response. As the upcoming lean season and impact of COVID-19 are increasing local food prices, CBT transfers are being adjusted to market prices when necessary.

Regional Overview

- The total number of COVID-19 cases in the region increased exponentially since the first reported cases (first recorded in Nigeria on 27 February). **As of 30 June, the region had 95,204 confirmed cases**, while the death toll rose to 1,851, or 1.9 percent of the total confirmed cases in the region. The top five countries affected are Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Guinea.
- **Gradual easing or lifting of many COVID-19 preventive and containment measures** put in place by Governments were reported in some countries, including reopening of worship places and restaurants, easing of curfew hours, and resuming of domestic flights. Nonetheless, border restrictions remain in place as of 30 June, as well as export bans by large exporting countries. The social and economic challenges induced by the consequences of the restrictive measures continue to have significant impacts on people's lives and livelihoods, exposing the most vulnerable to threats of food and nutrition insecurity, particularly at the peak of the lean season.
- The destabilizing effect of the pandemic also favors an increase in the activity of non-state armed groups, which continue to threaten the safety of the populations and the humanitarian staff, as well as the continuity of humanitarian operations. Since the beginning of June, incidents affecting WFP's operations were reported in the Central Sahel, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR) and Nigeria. As a result, **in-kind and cash distributions were temporarily suspended** in some affected areas to further assess the situation. Moreover, COVID-19's impact and containment efforts triggered protests in some countries, including in Mali and Senegal. As the focus of protests shifts from discontent over lockdowns to broader socio-economic grievances, this trend is likely to continue.

Monitoring of food security situation

- To contribute to strengthening data collection to help Governments and partners make informed decisions, WFP has stepped up remote monitoring of prices, markets and food security, to inform responses real-time. An example is the joint web survey with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that aims at **assessing the impact of the COVID-19 at**

micro-level in 15 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, Senegal and Sierra Leone).

- Localized food scarcity (particularly in parts of Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Senegal) were recorded, as well as an increase in food prices. Food commodity prices in May have stabilized overall compared to April, but remained above their pre-crisis levels, with price increases varying between 5 and 15 percent compared to April. Some recorded more than 15 percent increase, such as in CAR, Chad Nigeria, and Senegal, due to seasonality, ongoing economic crises, currency depreciation, supply chain disruptions, drop in local production, etc.
- Pre-COVID estimates of acute food insecurity already indicated an important increase from 2019 linked primarily to conflicts in the Central Sahel, northern Nigeria, Central African Republic, and Cameroon. The combination of seasonal and/or chronic drivers as well as the impact of COVID-19 could drive a further increase in the number of food insecure people, **from 24.5 million people pre-COVID to 57.5 million by the end of 2020 (135 percent increase)**¹. Of these people, 40 percent are in Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria, a further 10 percent in Niger, and between some 4 to 6 percent each in Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, and Senegal.
- Close monitoring of climate variabilities (rainfall conditions) continues in the region since May. Based on the [seasonal outlook for the next five months \(June-October\)](#) in Western and Central Africa, latest forecasts from some international climate centre were suggesting a very high likelihood (more than 50 percent) of **below-average rainfall during the 2020 agricultural season** (June to October) in most parts of the Gulf of Guinea region. This is likely leading to reduced crop yield and potential below average harvest in some areas, exacerbating the food insecurity of agricultural households. For some, this will be a consecutive year(s) of reduced production.
- According to WFP's corporate alert system, which indicates countries and sub-regions with emerging risks, the **primary countries of concern** which require attention based on heightened food insecurity, scale of operations and operational complexity include Nigeria, Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger), Cameroon, CAR and Chad. Additional countries to watch for the next six months include Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The corporate alert system identifies those where high operational impact for WFP is foreseen.

Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

- The revised 2020 total financial requirements for the region is USD 1.15 billion, and the **six-months net funding requirement (July-December 2020) is USD 770 million**, representing 67 percent of overall requirements.² Overall, 14 out of 19 country offices in

the region are reporting shortfalls of above 50 percent of their six-month requirements, including all the Level 2 and Level 3 emergency countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Mali, Niger and Nigeria).

- **Budget revisions** are ongoing in a number of countries offices, including Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The budget revisions are mainly to increase the crisis response requirements in the context of COVID-19 (including number of beneficiaries targeted), to add a crisis response related strategic outcome to their country strategic plans (CSPs), to scale up capacity strengthening to Government's disaster preparedness and shock response system, to increase service provision to Governments and humanitarian partners, and to address the mid-term socio-economic impact. Budget revisions were also recently completed in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia and Mauritania, while Togo's Limited Emergency Operation (LEO) was approved on 30 June, through which WFP will provide relief food assistance to households in three shock-prone regions at the request of the Government.
- In responding to the socio-economic and food security impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, WFP continues to rely on multi-sectoral consultative processes with national, regional and international stakeholders and partners, while leveraging and strengthening existing partnerships as part of its system approach. Partners include key line ministries and entities, ECOWAS, the G5 Sahel, CILSS, UN and development partners. Moreover, several new indications of contributions from donors were received recently to support country offices in their critical investment to sustain operations and support increased activity to meet additional needs.

WFP Operations

- **WFP plans to reach an additional 8.9 million beneficiaries** in the region for the second half of 2020³. This corresponds to a total of 22.4 million people who will benefit from lifesaving food and nutrition support as well as lifechanging resilience and livelihoods projects. Overall, **46 percent** of the additional beneficiaries are from Priority 1 countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria), while **31 percent** come from Priority 2 countries (Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania and Sierra Leone) and **23 percent** come from Priority 3 countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal and Togo).
- In line with **WFP's three immediate response pillars**, WFP continues to sustain critical life-saving assistance to WFP's pre-COVID beneficiaries based on programme criticality and do not harm approaches; scale-up to support the additional people on the brink of acute food insecurity due to COVID-19 and its compounded impacts; and support Governments and partners in their COVID-19 responses, providing technical assistance, tangible assets and services, and complementary support.

¹ [WFP's global response plan to COVID-19](#)

² As of mid-June. Figures are likely to increase as country offices continue to work on their scale-up plans.

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- As such, WFP is sustaining conflict and lean season response in the Sahel, North-East Nigeria, CAR and Cameroon, while scaling-up in urban areas and coastal countries, including Guinea, Liberia, Gambia, Ghana and Togo. In complex fragile contexts such as in CAR and North-East Nigeria, WFP seeks to extend coverage to people already in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3 and 4 not yet receiving assistance, who are now at heightened risk of falling deeper into hunger due to COVID-19. For the detailed response by country, kindly refer to pages 47 to 52 of [WFP's global response plan to COVID-19 \(June 2020\)](#).
- In line with [WFP's medium-term programme framework \(June 2020\)](#), WFP continues to support national systems through **three programme pillars**, including national social protection systems, basic service delivery and food systems. In Niger for example, WFP, the World Bank, UNICEF and other UN agencies finalized a joint note on the scale-up of a National Adaptive Social Protection Program as part of the response to COVID-19.
- **WFP's relief food assistance activities** to vulnerable internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and host populations, as well as to COVID-19 affected populations continue to be prioritized, in line with COVID-19 sensitive approaches rolled out, including social-distancing/crowd-minimizing measures and safe hygiene practices reinforced at food distribution points and provision of two to three-months rations to minimize frequency of advanced contact and gatherings. In Niger however, since June, WFP reinstated monthly distributions for beneficiaries targeted under the crisis and lean season responses, due to insufficient timely resources and related delays. Since the onset of the pandemic, WFP has geared up to deliver life-saving assistance to millions of food insecure households across the region.
- Country offices are scaling up **cash-based transfers (CBTs)**, linked in part to the higher urban nature of the COVID-19 response. In Côte d'Ivoire, CBTs (two-months rations) and hygiene kits were provided to 6,000 beneficiaries, while in Chad, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal, WFP plans to provide CBTs through e-cash and mobile money as well to targeted populations, including food assistance for assets (FFA) activities' beneficiaries, students, rural households and people affected by HIV. As the upcoming lean season and impact of COVID-19 are increasing local food prices, CBT transfers are being adjusted to market prices when necessary.
- **Resilience activities** remain suspended in most country offices, including CAR (only critical resilience activities maintained in some areas), Cameroon, Mali, Niger (participatory planning activities and community trainings) and Mauritania, while the community-based activities reoriented to household level and individual level activities are ongoing in other countries such as Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger. In Mali, the country office is finalizing the revised plan to ensure the re-activation of resilience programmes between June and September, while in CAR, the country is now exploring ways to resume resilience activities in June to prevent the delay in the completion of projects, particularly with the upcoming rainy season.

- **School feeding** activities remain suspended as well in most of the countries, and discussions with Governments on the safe re-opening of schools are ongoing. In a number of countries, activities have gradually resumed, with the reopening of schools, fully or partially (i.e. of the last grades for their examinations). This was the case in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. In others, school feeding activities were reoriented to provide take-home rations to targeted school children in lieu of school meals, including in Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Mali, with the same option planned out in CAR, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal.



WFP and the Ministry of Education, distributed food items for targeted vulnerable school-aged children, in Roca Santa Margarida, Sao Tome and Principe. WFP/Isabel Santos.

Service Provision

- WFP continues to provide critical technical support to host Governments and partners in providing essential cargo and passenger transport, as well as procurement services. WFP is also providing logistics assets, including the donation of mobile storage units (MSUs), in some cases being repurposed as isolation units for COVID-19 patients or screening areas (cases in CAR, Cameroon and Chad).
- As of end of June, West Africa has the most **extensive network of flight destinations**, with 46 percent of the total number of passengers of WFP's air passenger service travelling within this region. From Accra, Ghana, at least three daily flights operate to key locations in the region that are currently not served by commercial airlines. Flights adhere to countries' COVID-19 regulations and the Standard Operating Procedures issued by WHO in mid-June. Over 5,000 passengers and 1,399 m³ of critical health and humanitarian cargo were transported from Accra under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, WFP bilateral services and UNHRD dispatches.
- WFP also continues to manage the **United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS)**, which is currently operating in Benin (first passenger flight was on 9 June), Cameroon (partially operating, as flights to the South-West region remain suspended), CAR, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Nigeria. Meanwhile in Niger, UNHAS flights remain suspended. The introduction of UNHAS is

also planned in Burkina Faso, pending financial availability.

- The establishment of the COVID-19 field hospital in Ghana, which will serve to support humanitarian workers in the region should they contract COVID-19, was finalized. WHO will be responsible for management, staffing and operation of the field hospital, which is soon ready to receive patients.
- In addition to supply chain and logistics support, WFP is also enabling the Governments' COVID-19 response through digital support. For instance, in Sierra Leone, WFP set up IT systems to allow the national Government to work remotely and constructed an intensive care unit facility in the capital Freetown. In Côte d'Ivoire, as part of the technical and financial support to the Ministry of Agriculture in optimizing the food security surveillance system, WFP's IT unit is providing support to improve their data management system.

Inter-Agency Coordination

- Based on the **revised COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP May update)**, the total funding requirement for the region (including COVID and non-COVID needs) is USD 4.1 billion. The food security cluster has the highest share (USD 1.3 billion), followed by the nutrition cluster (USD 424 million), while the requirements of the logistics and telecommunications cluster are respectively USD 84 million and USD 5 million. The countries part of the GHRP from the region include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo (Benin, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo were newly included in the revised GHRP, to account for their COVID-19 related needs and because of national/humanitarian system response capacities).
- Through active **food security clusters/sectors/working groups**, WFP and partners are disseminating best practices for safe delivery of food assistance during the pandemic, coordinating joint analysis on food security and markets, and supporting the development of national COVID-19 response plans including on targeting and prioritization. In support of these efforts, WFP rapidly adapted its various real-time remote assessment and monitoring tools to support Governments and partners to assess and track impacts. In Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, Cadre Harmonisé reviews are ongoing. In the Central Sahel, the food security clusters also worked on the revision of the 2020 humanitarian action plans in the context of COVID-19. Moreover, coordination for the lean season response is ongoing in the region, although seed availability is being impacted in some countries by supply chain issues.
- Through **logistics clusters/sectors/working groups**, WFP and partners are facilitating the transport of various relief items and shelter materials, including critical COVID-19 response items, to hard-to-reach areas, constructing or managing storage facilities for partners, collecting and consolidating pipeline information, providing humanitarian cargo movement notifications, etc. In CAR, the database of cargo on route to CAR is

being shared on a weekly basis with OCHA for any possible support for priority customs clearance. Lastly, support is also provided to provide storage space.

- Through **emergency telecommunications clusters/sectors/ working groups**, WFP and partners are providing internet/data connectivity services and support for functioning of radio communications among others to better support implementation of humanitarian activities. In CAR and Gambia, support is provided to health partners to establish dedicated COVID-19 call centers, emergency hotlines and chatbots to disseminate critical information and official health guidelines and to enable the population to access immediate 24 hours support and guidance on reporting and handling probable COVID-19 cases. In CAR, plans are underway to set up additional call centers to accommodate the entire population, including those in IDP camps, and technical, connectivity and hardware support is ongoing for the project on digitalizing the health system to support the COVID-19 response. In Nigeria, the emergency telecommunications sector continues to conduct a series of virtual capacity building activities on security communications to humanitarian responders.



A health official collecting the temperature of a staff from WFP's cooperating partner before accessing the distribution site in Kaya, Centre Nord Region in Burkina Faso. WFP/Mahamady Ouedraogo.