



# WFP Mauritania Country Brief

March 2018

## Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel, with a population of 4.4 million (UNFPA, 2017) living over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km<sup>2</sup> territory.

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity and resilience of populations. Over the past five years, food insecurity rates ranged from 25 to 30 percent during the lean season. Global acute malnutrition rates are also high in children aged 6-59 months and above the WHO emergency threshold of 15 percent (SMART) in some departments, especially during the lean season.

Mauritania continues to host the second-to largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with more than 53,000 refugees registered in Mbera camp as of March 2018. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Gender Inequality Index: **147**

2015 Human Development Index: **156 out of 188**

Food insecurity: **28% (FSMS 2017)**

Chronic malnutrition: **31% of children between 6-59 months**

Main Photo

Credit: WFP/Adrien Rebours  
Caption: Children playing in a village near Kaedi (southwestern Gorgol region)

## In Numbers

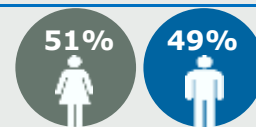
**538,400 projected** severely food-insecure persons (IPC Phase 3 & 4) (source: *Cadre Harmonisé* projections for 2018 lean season)

**10.9 percent** global acute malnutrition in children under 5 (source: SMART 2017)

**US\$ 43 m\*** six months (April-Sept 2018) net funding requirements, representing 70,6 % of total needs

\*Including emergency funding needs

**53,632 people assisted** in MARCH 2018



## Strategic Planning

- In March, in a Member State briefing in Geneva on the humanitarian situation in Mauritania, the Resident Coordinator, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and ACF Representatives drew attention on concerns for the worrying food security and nutritional situation the country is facing this year, and the serious funding gaps that all operations including UNHAS are incurring in. Meetings with ECHO/DEVCO were also held in Brussels (WFP and UN Resident Coordinator).
- In March, WFP attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) Conference of Parties held in the capital of Mauritania. WFP called for sustained investments in long-term disaster risk reduction efforts, emphasizing in this regard the essential role of the ARC and ARC Replica initiatives in providing insurance-based financing and early respond to natural disasters on the African Continent.

## 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan

- The results of the March *Cadre Harmonisé* and the Food Security Monitoring System assessment (started in February 2018) led WFP and humanitarian partners to refine the geographic targeting for the 2018 humanitarian response in coordination with the Government. Through a concerted and complementary approach, WFP, Government and partners will intervene in the high priority departments in the regions of Hodh Ech-Charghi, Gorgol and Guidimakha presenting the highest levels of hunger and malnutrition starting from April.
- WFP increased its efforts for preparedness and programming of confirmed and advance funding to ensure early lean season interventions with nutritious foods and cash distributions, and for the scale-up of operations in June-September. WFP is preparing to assist 64,500 people during April-May (Phase I), and expects to cover 200,000 people during June-September (Phase II) based on funding currently confirmed. Areas targeted include three departments presenting the highest vulnerabilities.

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## WFP Country Strategy

Total Requirement (in USD)	Confirmed Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
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### Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018)

60.9 m	17.6 m	43 m
<b>Strategic Result 1:</b> Everyone has access to food		
<b>Strategic Outcome 1:</b> Food insecure (and vulnerable) Mauritanian populations in the six targeted regions, including school-age children have stable access to adequate food all year-round		
4.4 m	0.2 m	1.2 m
<b>Strategic Result 1:</b> Everyone has access to food		
<b>Strategic Outcome 2:</b> Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises		
49.2 m	16.2 m	37.6 m
<b>Strategic Result 2:</b> No one suffers from malnutrition		
<b>Strategic Outcome 3:</b> Children and pregnant and lactating women and girls in the six targeted regions have improved nutritional status all year-round <i>NB: this includes only capacity-development augmentation</i>		
0.2 m	0	0.7 m
<b>Strategic Result 3:</b> Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders		
<b>Strategic Outcome 4:</b> Food-insecure smallholders and communities in the six targeted regions have enhanced livelihoods and resilience to better support food security and nutrition needs all year-round		
2.9 m	0	2.3 m
<b>Strategic Result 8:</b> Global partnership support		
<b>Strategic Outcome 5:</b> The humanitarian community in Mauritania has access to UNHAS services all year-round		
3.3 m	1.3 m	0.8 m
<b>Strategic Result 5:</b> Countries strengthened capacities		
<b>Strategic Outcome 6:</b> Government has enhanced capacities to manage food security and nutrition policies and programmes and identify, target and assist food-insecure and nutritionally-vulnerable populations all year-round		
0.9 m	0m	0.5 m

## WFP Country Activities

<b>SO 1</b>	Food-insecure (and vulnerable) Mauritanian populations in the six targeted regions, including school-age children have stable access to adequate food all year-round
<b>SO 2</b>	Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises
<b>SO 3</b>	Children and pregnant and lactating women and girls in the six targeted regions have improved nutritional status all year-round <i>NB: this includes only capacity development and augmentation</i>
<b>SO 4</b>	Food-insecure smallholders and communities in the six targeted regions have enhanced livelihoods and resilience to better support food security and nutrition needs all year-round
<b>SO 5</b>	The humanitarian community in Mauritania has access to UNHAS services all year-round
<b>SO 6</b>	Government has enhanced capacities to manage food security and nutrition policies and programmes, and identify, target and assist food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations all year-round

## Operational Updates

### SO 3 – Support to Malian refugees

- WFP assisted 53,600 refugees in March, with individual monthly cash entitlements (USD 12.45) but no in-kind support. WFP also provided preventive and curative nutrition support to 4,400 children aged 6-59 months. The increase in beneficiaries assisted follows the new arrivals and registrations observed during the month of March in Mbera camp.

### SO 5 - UNHAS

- In March, UNHAS transported 200 passengers and 1.242 mt of light cargo through 29 in-country rotations. UNHAS successfully performed one medical evacuation for MSF staff. Thanks to donors' contributions, UNHAS operations will be guaranteed until October, provided authorization is given by the Government.

## Monitoring

- Food Security Monitoring System and Cadre Harmonisé March 2018: FSMS** data collection disaggregated at departmental level has been completed in mid-March. Preliminary results show an exceptionally worrying situation in post-harvest: the prevalence of food insecurity (26.2 percent) has increased by 30 percent compared with the same period last year.
- The raw data from the FSMS, along with other key nutrition and agropastoral data analysis, was used to inform the **March Cadre Harmonisé**. The exercise highlighted that 350,600 people are currently in crisis/emergency (IPC phase 3-4) situation. The projections provided by the *Cadre Harmonisé* indicate that 538,400 people will need emergency food assistance during the lean season, more than double as compared with 2017.

## Challenges

- During the month of March, government restrictions have been preventing UNHAS from accessing key locations, with the exception of Nema and Bassikounou that continued to be served by UNHAS. This has had an important impact on monitoring activities of all humanitarian partners in the country. WFP and the Resident Coordinator are exerting all efforts to receive the yearly authorization for all planned destinations from the Government.
- Limited resources continue to affect WFP's readiness capacity in terms of adequate targeting and pipeline to intervene with adequate food/cash and nutrition assistance in support of crisis-affected people. WFP has resorted to internal advance financing mechanisms to ensure a prompt response to high food and nutrition needs in the country.
- Since January, assistance to refugees covered only 65 percent of their needs, due to late funding and in-kind pipeline breaks. In-kind arrivals are expected in late April, meaning the first food distributions of the year will be ensured in May. Urgent funding of USD 2.1 million is needed to ensure cash transfers to refugees between April and June, and USD 4.8 million is needed to cover the next six months.

## Donors

USA (FFP and BPRM), UK (DFID) Japan, European Union (ECHO), Australia, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, Spain, France, Monaco