

Highlights

On Thursday, the UN along with the World Food Programme called for swift and determined action to avoid the most destabilizing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in a revised Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) to fight the spread of the coronavirus in fragile countries.

WFP is focusing efforts on mobilizing the resources it needs to provide food assistance to the 100 million people it sets out to reach in 2020. However, a further 130 million could be driven into severe hunger in low- and middle-income countries due to the socio-economic fallout from COVID-19. WFP is dedicated to safeguarding more vulnerable populations at risk of slipping into hunger in 2020 by working with governments and other partners to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WFP will seek to augment its humanitarian response wherever needed and possible. The updated GHRP indicates that US\$1.4 billion is required to respond to rising food needs but, so far, this refers only to the imminent food insecurity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 64 priority countries. WFP continues to conduct country-level assessments and aims to ascertain a comprehensive picture of urgent additional food requirements by June.

In parallel, WFP is developing a framework to support governments in addressing and mitigating the socio-economic impacts from the spread of the coronavirus on its vulnerable populations. WFP's proven expertise in data and analytics, technical advice, advocacy and operational support - including our agility to adapt programmes, such as between cash or food-based transfers - makes us an ideal partner with which to respond to the crisis.

WFP's logistics services will continue to provide the backbone for global COVID-19 efforts, enabling humanitarian and health workers on the frontlines of the pandemic to stay and deliver. Sustaining this part of the operation through 2020 will cost an estimated US\$965 million, and adequate funding will be crucial to enable the global COVID-19 response in the world's most fragile settings.

On behalf of the humanitarian and health communities, WFP launched its cargo and passenger air services last week. The first cargo flight departed 30 April from Liège (Belgium) and the first passenger flight took place on 1 May between Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Accra (Ghana).



Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

WFP has received **US\$1.1 billion in confirmed** contributions, following the Executive Director's appeal on 23 March. The top five donors include the **United States, Germany, European Commission, Canada and Switzerland, with key support from UN CERF** as well. The funding will go towards meeting the three-month requirement of US\$1.9 billion to sustain WFP operations in priority countries. With current forecasts against the appeal standing at US\$811 million, donors are urged to confirm contributions at the earliest opportunity.

The net funding requirement for ongoing L3 emergencies for the next six months stands at a total of US\$1.6 billion. **Yemen** is currently **facing the highest shortfall**, both in absolute terms (US\$717 million) and as a share of projected needs (69 percent), **followed by Burkina Faso, Niger and Syria**.

WFP anticipates that funding requirements for its portfolio of Country Strategic Plans will increase as some forty Country Offices are in the process of adjusting their programmes, including budgets, to meet new needs arising from the impact of the pandemic.



Progress against US\$1.9 B
After ED letter (23 March)

Under the newly [updated Global Humanitarian Response Plan \(GHRP\)](#), WFP will require **US\$965 million** through the end of 2020 to ensure continued provision of critical common logistics and other supply chain services on behalf of the global health and humanitarian community. To date, WFP has received **US\$76 million from Denmark, Lichtenstein, Norway, United Kingdom, UN CERF and private donors** towards WFP's common services provision component under the GHRP. Forecasts stand at a total of US\$126 million. **WFP urgently appeals for additional funding, as the window is closing and we, WFP, are running against time.**

Following the UN Secretary-General's establishment of the **UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19 MPTF)**, which seeks to support low- and middle-income programme countries to respond to the crisis and recover from socio-economic shocks, thirteen proposals with participation of WFP have been submitted to the Fund. To date, WFP has received indication of **successful proposals in Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia and Tunisia**. Additional Country Offices are currently awaiting responses, with the anticipated allocation per country standing at US\$1 to 2 million (to be shared among two to four UN agencies).



Progress against US\$965 M GHRP
After GHRP launch (7 May)

WFP Operations

The recently published **Global Report on Food Crises 2020** estimates that **135 million people in 55 countries faced acute hunger in 2019**, primarily due to conflict, the effects of climate change and economic crises. Looking ahead to 2020, the report anticipated rising hunger needs due to growing trends in violence, conflict and population displacement, as well as other phenomena such as a severe lean season in the Sahel and massive locust swarms, descending on East Africa. These trends and phenomena started to play out prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulted in higher food assistance needs, compared to 2019. On top of that, WFP's latest projections indicate that there could be **an additional 130 million people who could be pushed into severe hunger in low- and middle- income countries due to the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, alone**.

It is becoming increasingly likely that the COVID-19 pandemic could also have far-reaching implications on socio-political stability, security and conflict dynamics across regions.

This could give rise to new crises and/or exacerbate existing ones. It could lead to new displacements, higher levels of food insecurity and disruptions to aid delivery.

While the health emergency looms in many of WFP's operational countries, the consequences of managing the outbreak and the socio-economic impact of the pandemic are already playing out. Movement restrictions, loss of employment and income, school closures, and disruptions to other basic services have become a reality for millions.

WFP is focused on **safeguarding assistance to the existing beneficiary caseload of 100 million people** that rely on our assistance to survive. At the same time, efforts are on-going to **assess augmented needs, review beneficiary targeting and prioritize activities**, based on what is currently known about COVID-19. WFP is utilizing corporate resources, leveraging partnerships and applying innovative programmatic solutions to get ahead of the curve and reach

beneficiaries, with the sole commitment of leaving no one behind.

WFP Country Offices are **adjusting and adapting programmes in line with changing environments to best deliver assistance safely**. In many countries, food or cash distributions now cover two-month rations (e.g. Mauritania, Cameroon, Nigeria, Madagascar, South Sudan), with physical distancing and hygiene measures in place. Distributions are being staggered to limit group gatherings (e.g. Yemen, Lebanon, Central African Republic, Rwanda). Cash-Based-Transfers (CBT) programmes continue without significant interruptions, diversifying transfer mechanisms and deactivating biometrics.

WFP has enhanced its remote monitoring capacity (mVAM) in some twenty countries to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 on the most vulnerable populations, Country Offices are **launching food security assessments**, including in urban areas. Real-time information is critical for informing programme adjustments and WFP is tracking and publishing this data through [HungerMap Live](#).

Country Offices are **updating their plans** to account for additional food or cash assistance needs due to the pandemic and other concurrent shocks, such as drought in West Africa, locust infestations in East Africa, continued conflict across many regions, and other factors that reduce access and the availability of food. In doing so, Country Offices take careful account of WFP and partner capacities at individual country level to support operational augmentation, technical assistance and national capacity development. Budget Revisions are being prepared, as necessary, to capture changes to operations.

WFP's Programme and Policy Development Department is finalizing the **WFP COVID-19 Medium Term Programme**

Half of the countries where WFP school meals programmes exist are adjusting – or in the process thereof – to provide take home rations in lieu of on-site meals. While most schools remain closed across the globe, some countries like China and Madagascar have begun to re-open their education systems. One out of five countries have paused their school meals programme during school closures, either keeping commodities in stock or loaning them to other programmes. A couple of countries opted to switch to a cash transfer modality, usually through the national social protection system or cash-based take home rations for pupils' households. **WFP and UNICEF have joined forces to support children's well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic** and are launching a global 'Back to School' campaign to ensure strong and comprehensive health and nutrition for school children. The Executive Directors of both agencies sent a joint message to all their Country Directors last week, encouraging them to respond jointly to this crisis by prioritizing their planning. The campaign was launched last Wednesday this week through a joint [press-release](#).

Framework to articulate WFP's role, alongside our partners, in supporting governments to address the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic through 2020 and set the stage for planning into 2021. The Framework establishes three interdependent, systems-level pillars where WFP has clear expertise and value-add, namely Social Protection, Basic Services (Nutrition and School-based programmes) and Food Systems. The guidance pivots WFP's response and engagement with national governments and other stakeholders to strengthen national systems addressing the crisis.

According to the World Bank, a total of 159 countries have planned, introduced or adapted social protection measures in response to COVID-19, out of which 32% are through cash transfers. In the 64 countries, captured by the GHRP, governments are implementing one or a combination of the different social protection measures, with cash transfers in 41 countries. WFP Country Offices are adjusting programmes in line with the changing context in 25 countries. WFP is shifting to or scaling up cash transfers to sustain programmes and mitigate the risk of contagion.

Where cash transfers are already in place, various approaches are being used to mitigate the risk for the virus to spread, depending on operational needs and constraints. These approaches include staggering cash distributions over longer periods to avoid crowding at cash-out locations and markets (e.g. Yemen, Lebanon, Central African Republic, Rwanda), providing multi-month transfers to limit movement (e.g. Mauritania, Cameroon, Nigeria, Madagascar, South Sudan), planning door-to-door deliveries to support quarantined people and limit movement (e.g. Kenya, Somalia) and deactivating biometrics for transacting and identity verification.



WFP, UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank also came together to advocate for the safe reopening of schools in the poorest countries. The guidance said it is vital that school feeding and health programmes are in place, together with proper distancing procedures, and water, sanitation and hygiene measures when schools reopen. This is mentioned in the new joint [Framework for safe re-opening of schools](#) and in the [guidance for nutrition in schools](#) produced by WFP, FAO and UNICEF.



While **WFP's global supply chain continues to function without any major interruptions**, an overall slow-down has been observed due to the implementation of containment measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, such as movement restrictions, lockdowns, additional sanitation measures and reduced staffing at ports, customs offices and border crossings.

WFP is **pre-positioning three-month-stocks of food or cash assistance** in or near the most fragile countries. This will help minimize disruptions and increase flexibility; allowing WFP to adjust its response as needs and circumstances change. Quick action is critical as a number of countries are approaching their annual lean season when access to food is severely constrained and malnutrition rates peak; coupled with looming annual hurricane and monsoon seasons.

WFP worked with UNICEF, the Global Nutrition Cluster and the Global Technical Assistance Mechanism for Nutrition to develop a brief on [Protecting Maternal Diets and Nutrition Services and Practices in the Context of COVID-19](#). This brief provides interim guidance on actions to protect the practices, diets and nutrition services for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers during the mitigation phase¹ of the COVID-19 response.

This joint initiative was prompted by concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impacts are likely to disproportionately impact on diets, nutrition practices and services of women. Pregnancy and breastfeeding are periods of nutritional vulnerability when nutrient needs are increased to meet physiological requirements, sustain fetal growth and development and protect the health of the mother while breastfeeding. The next weekly iteration of the External Situation Report will provide more details on the additional risks women face in the context of COVID-19.

To ensure a steady flow of commodities to where they are needed, **Supply Chain is diversifying and accelerating international sourcing**; maximizing local and regional procurement to mitigate transport risks; and increasing the level of 'safety stock' in all regions, especially in the most at-risk countries, to prevent pipeline breaks. WFP is also strengthening or deploying additional personnel in strategic roles and locations to ensure faster sourcing and movement of humanitarian cargo along key corridors.

UNHAS services resumed in Cameroon on 24 April and in Yemen on 29 April 2020. Limited UNHAS passenger flights continue in remote areas of Sudan, outside Khartoum province. UNHAS passenger services remain suspended due to COVID-19 movement restrictions in Ethiopia, Libya, Mauritania, Niger, and Somalia, with cargo services suspended in Libya, Mauritania, and Niger.

Service Provision

WFP is finalizing the set-up of its **network of Global Humanitarian Response Hubs** across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Cargo and passenger air services linking these hubs have now commenced. This hub-and-spokes system will provide the logistics backbone of the global humanitarian response to COVID-19.

The first of WFP's **free-to-user air cargo services for the COVID-19 response** departed on 30 April. A WFP-contracted Boeing 757 cargo flight took off from the newly established Global Humanitarian Response Hub in Liège, Belgium, carrying almost 70 m³ of medical cargo and

personal protective equipment on behalf of UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross, destined for West Africa. Further cargo flights from the Global Humanitarian Hubs in Guangzhou, China, and Dubai, United Arab Emirates, as well additional flights from Liège are expected in the coming days. These air links between WFP's network of Humanitarian Response Hubs, and onward to final destination countries where required will ensure the predictable and sustained movement of life-saving humanitarian and health cargo.

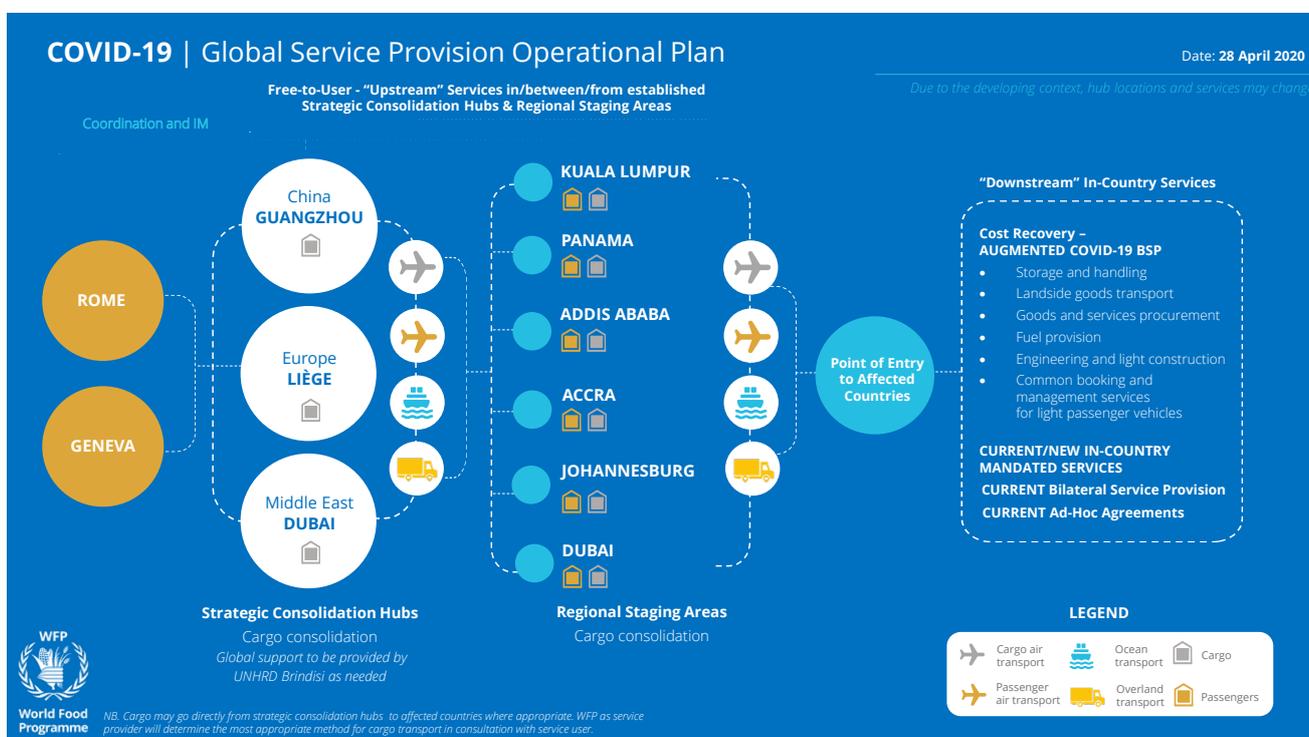
WFP is accepting requests for these free-to-user cargo transport services through its newly-launched Emergency Service Marketplace. The [Emergency Service Marketplace](#) is part of ongoing efforts by WFP to digitally transform its operations and help drive the humanitarian sector forward, leveraging the most innovative solutions to reach those furthest behind.

In view of current disruptions to commercial passenger air transport services caused by COVID-19, WFP has also established a **humanitarian passenger air service** – in compliance with national public health procedures – to ensure that international medical teams, health responders, UN and NGO staff, representatives from embassies and the donor community can rapidly reach the areas where they are most needed to ensure the continuity of life-saving humanitarian operations around the world. The first of these flights to transport passengers between the Regional Humanitarian Response Hubs in Accra, Ghana, and Addis

Ababa, Ethiopia, took place on 1 May, with further flights planned in the coming days. Booking requests for these flights are being accepted from registered organizations via the Humanitarian Booking Hub.

Through its existing **UNHRD** network, WFP has supported the humanitarian community in its response to COVID-19 by **dispatching 137 consignments of COVID-19 supplies, valued over US\$ 3.6 million to 94 countries** on behalf of 15 partners since January 2020.

The UNSG established a **High-level Supply Chain Task Force, co-chaired by WHO and WFP** to expand on the efforts of the **WHO-led Supply Chain Inter-Agency Coordination Cell (SCICC)**. The Task Force will implement a global strategy to ensure access to critical and life-saving supplies. WFP has deployed supply chain staff to support efforts in information management, aviation, and cargo tracking, enhancing WFP's overall collaboration with WHO in Geneva.



Inter-Agency Coordination

WFP is an active participant in UN inter-agency mechanisms, such as the UN Crisis Management Team, the Supply Chain Task Force, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee – Principals, the Operational Policy and Advocacy Group, and the Emergency Directors Group.

WFP is engaging on multiple fronts with UN sister agencies to harmonize flexible and simplified processes and approaches for immediate COVID-19 related engagement on the ground.

Global Logistics Cluster (GLC): Logistics Clusters have been formally activated in [Somalia](#), Ethiopia and the [Pacific](#) region,

with a request for formal activation of a Logistics Cluster in Sudan underway. WFP is also supporting the National Logistics Cluster in [Nepal](#) by making free-to-user road transport and storage services available to the humanitarian community in order to support their COVID-19 response.

Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) has set up five working groups to strengthen the coordination between partners in their preparedness and humanitarian response to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The working groups are producing practical coordination guidance on crops and seeds,

fisheries, livestock, market-based approaches to support food markets/supply chains, food hygiene and food handling. During the past weeks, country-level FSCs have provided essential information for the GHRP revision.

The gFSC is gradually collecting data from new countries, while providing coordination support to all countries included in the GHRP. The gFSC is also monitoring the risk of Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) 2 areas to fall into IPC3.

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC): WFP is using innovation and technology to track and resolve COVID-19 issues, to limit the spread of COVID-19, protect beneficiaries, staff and partners and to get ahead of the food

security issues being created around the world. The WFP-led ETC is helping reach communities early with consistent and culturally appropriate health information, countering misinformation and building trust. This includes a national COVID-19 hotline with chatbot support being developed on messenger services, such as WhatsApp, in the Central African Republic, Iraq, Yemen and Libya. To date, the ETC-run Libya hotline has received over 14,000 calls. The ETC in the Pacific is coordinating with WHO's task force on COVID-19 to set up short code hotlines in several island nations and territories. In Yemen, the ETC supports the Ministry of Health and Populations in upgrading the existing hotline set up in Sana'a and the set-up of a new hotline in Ade.

Regional Updates

Regional Bureau Bangkok

The COVID-19 economic impact is already showing visible signs in several countries in the Asia Pacific Region. Sporadic increases in commodity retail prices in local markets may impact food security. WFP is directly supporting governments and partners in their COVID-19 response by customizing or scaling up existing social protection programmes, as well as through service provision and food assistance in quarantine and treatment centres. In Afghanistan, together with the World Bank, UN and government partners, WFP is developing a social relief package through cash and in-kind transfer schemes to support food security among socially vulnerable households. In Bhutan, WFP is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture to develop a national COVID-19 agriculture stimulus plan.

Activities have been adjusted to continue lifesaving relief assistance, while mitigating risks of infection. School meals programmes targeting 1.8 million students are affected by school closures due to COVID-19 or for regular holidays. In Laos, WFP plans to provide remaining stocks at the school level as take-home rations. In Bangladesh, WFP is preparing to deliver two month-worth of fortified biscuits for each student. The Government of Nepal and WFP have now resumed distributions to mother and child health and nutrition beneficiaries at around 50 health posts.

Regional Bureau Cairo

The Middle East and North Africa Region has been plagued by major conflicts in countries such as Syria, Libya and Yemen, with millions of people displaced in recent years. COVID-19 will worsen the humanitarian situation, and vulnerabilities are going to be further pronounced in countries that are heavily dependent on commodity export revenue, particularly oil, such as Iran, Iraq and Libya, as well as countries with fragile macroeconomic conditions such as Lebanon.

WFP activities continue to be adjusted to meet increased and changing needs. An increasing number of national governments are choosing Cash Based Transfers (CBT) and requesting WFP's support in implementation. In Libya, WFP is assisting beneficiaries through the voucher-based assistance, aiming to reach 5,000 people in Tripoli.

Nutrition activities continue to be impacted. As the regular sourcing and delivery channels of Specialized Nutritious Food products (SNFs) in several countries remain disrupted, WFP is using appropriate and more readily available alternatives. Additionally, school meals in the traditional form remain suspended, with schools in every country closed. WFP has increased its support to governments across the region and efforts are underway to include school meals within national social protection programmes.

WFP continues to support government and non-government social protection responses to COVID-19 across the region. In Libya, UN agencies and the World Bank (WB) have come together to discuss the best ways to support the government in response to COVID-19. Gender issues are of particular concern during this pandemic and more WFP Country Offices, such as in Egypt and Tunisia, are including gender dimensions in rapid assessments. WFP is collaborating with the regional gender working group to launch a regional campaign to combat gender-based violence (GBV) in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Regional Bureau
Dakar**

While many West and Central African countries continue to be affected by conflict (e.g. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger, Nigeria) and climate-related shocks, the major fallout from COVID-19 is likely to be commodity market volatility and supply chain disruption, impacting food imports. The recent drop in oil prices is likely to diminish government revenue in major oil exporting countries, such as Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and Senegal, which could increase the cost of imports of critical goods, including food.

A COVID-19-induced economic downturn is likely to drive additional needs. Large scale-up operations in response to the COVID-19 impact are foreseen in the coastal countries, including Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

In Central Sahel, 4.8 million people are food insecure as of the beginning of the lean season in April. Prior to the start of the lean season and COVID-19 outbreak, 3.9 million people were food insecure (1.6 million in Burkina Faso, 0.76 million in Mali, 1.6 million in Niger). This reflects a staggering increase of 167 percent compared to the same time last year (Mar-May 2019) and up 20 percent from Oct-Nov 2019 period.

In the Central Sahel, WFP operations will double in size to meet the needs in 2020, prioritizing life-saving assistance. However, access constraints continue to be a hindrance due to insecurity, notably in areas where most additional people in need of food assistance live.

In the region, many operations, such as early recovery, community resilience and school feeding activities, are being adapted or are currently delayed. In Senegal, WFP is reallocating existing funds to provide CBT to pupils' households for the rest of the school year, as school feeding activities are on hold. In Guinea Bissau, WFP is planning CBT assistance for the lean season as part of its work with the national social protection system and UNICEF.



WFP/ Glory Ndaka

**Regional Bureau
Johannesburg**

Growing climate-related shocks have afflicted the region recently, resulting in a record number of people being pushed into food insecurity. In addition to this fragility, vulnerable and commodity export-dependent economies, such as Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, are expected to be significantly affected by the economic fallout of COVID-19.

The impact of the economic downturn on food security, particularly in urban areas, is a growing concern. WFP continues to conduct market assessments on prices and food availability to determine further impact of economic shocks on the cost of the basic food basket.

Despite restrictions, WFP continues its food distributions and cash-based transfers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Republic of the Congo, and Tanzania. In Zimbabwe, WFP has assisted 100,000 individuals in urban settings and plans to reach an additional 100,000 people by June/July with various CBT delivery mechanisms. In Tanzania, WFP is distributing food to refugees in pre-packed food rations. WFP is providing take-home rations in response to the suspension of school feeding activities in Madagascar and the Republic of Congo.

Across the region, WFP continues discussions with governments and humanitarian partners on rolling out and scaling up social protection assistance, specifically in support of the most vulnerable urban and rural populations affected by the impact of the pandemic. Several Country Offices are supporting governments in developing CBT programmes, such as in Eswatini and Malawi.

**Regional Bureau
Nairobi**

COVID-19 strikes at a time when the East Africa region is fighting an ongoing desert locust outbreak and is recovering from drought and floods in 2019. Food insecurity is alarmingly high, particularly in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Somalia and Kenya, as the region hosts 22 percent of the world's total number of acutely food insecure people. Malnutrition treatment activities have been prioritized in all countries in the region and alternative products are being selected to anticipate the global challenges to the specialized nutritious food supply.

Given the high levels of vulnerability in urban settings, the food security situation could further deteriorate, should COVID-19 quickly spread to rural areas and disrupt highly labour-intensive agricultural production.

Refugee populations and communities living in urban informal settlements are a major concern. In response, WFP is distributing double rations to refugee populations to mitigate risks. In Somalia, WFP is shifting distribution modalities from cash to vouchers for April-May and implementing mobile money to transfer entitlements to beneficiaries under its rural safety net programme.

WFP is working with governments and the World Bank across the region to strengthen national social protection systems and enhance social safety net coverage.

**Regional Bureau
Panama**

The region's high dependence on the export of primary commodities makes it very vulnerable to price swings on international commodity markets as the one driven by the global economic downturn, following the outbreak of COVID-19. Also, the region reported an increase in social unrest and violence with waves of protest to lift the restrictions.

At least 15 million people are facing severe food insecurity across the region. In countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Haiti WFP has increasingly assisted people in quarantine and in urban settings. In Colombia, the crisis is particularly affecting the livelihoods of the urban poor, including migrants with precarious, often informal, sources of income. In response to this situation, WFP has started expanding its operational area to cities such as Bogotá, Cali and Palmira.

WFP and UNICEF are working closely together across the region, to implement jointly where possible, and enhance coordination of technical assistance to governments and partners, including on social protection, school-based programmes, nutrition, protection; in addition to communications and implementation support.