

Highlights

WFP's new [Global Response to COVID-19 plan \(June 2020\)](#) was released this week, detailing the dire global needs, WFP's response, and the significant requirements to sustain and scale up operations due to the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. To tackle the rising tide of hunger, WFP will undertake its **biggest humanitarian response in history, reaching up to 138 million people** in 2020, up from a record 97 million in 2019.

According to WFP's new estimates, 270 million people could be acutely food insecure by the year's end in the countries where WFP operates – an 82 percent increase from before the pandemic – including 121 million people driven into severe hunger from the fallout of COVID-19.

"The frontline in the battle against the coronavirus is shifting from the rich world to the poor world," said WFP Executive Director David Beasley in the [news release](#) about the plan. *"Until the day we have a medical vaccine, food is the best vaccine against chaos. Without it, we could see increased social unrest and protests, a rise in migration, deepening conflict and widespread under-nutrition among populations that were previously immune from hunger."*

The fallout from COVID-19 is being felt hardest in **Latin America and the Caribbean**, where needs are projected to rise 269 percent, and in **West and Central Africa**, where the pandemic's compounding effects could drive 57.5 million people into acute food insecurity. In particular, urban communities in low- and middle-income countries are being dragged into hunger by job losses and a precipitous drop in remittances.

WFP is appealing for US\$ 4.9 billion to sustain and scale up its life-saving work across 83 operations for the next six months. Sustained funding is urgently required to respond to the immediate consequences of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable, and support governments and partners as they curb the spread of the disease and deal with the fallout from the pandemic. This represents 62 percent of the total budget required through the end of 2020, including an additional **US\$ 1.7 billion in COVID-19 scale-up requirements**, with 94 percent dedicated to crisis response.

The logistical backbone of the global COVID-19 response, WFP's Common Services risks grinding to a halt by mid-July if an immediate injection of funds is not received. WFP's Common Services transport humanitarian and health cargo and passengers to where they're needed most through a network of hubs, air links and medevac services. Against the US\$ 965 million requirement for 2020, to date, only US\$ 142 million has been received.

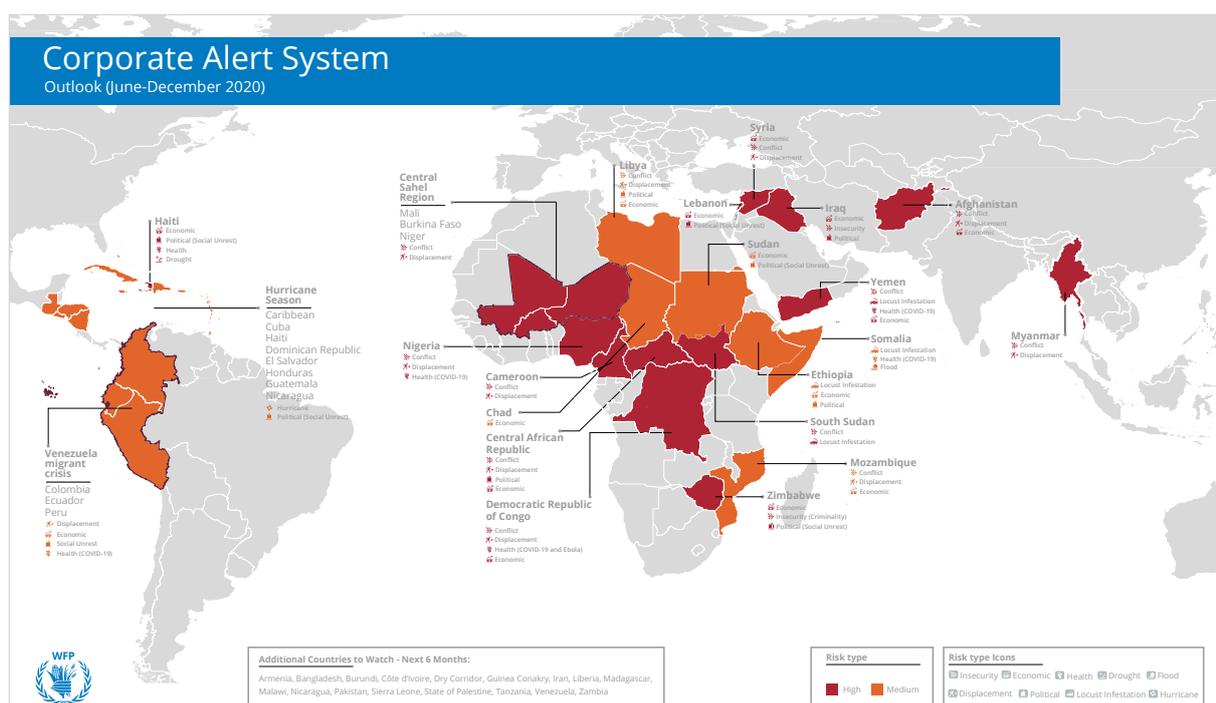
HIGHLIGHTS | GLOBAL COMMON SERVICES

PASSENGERS TRANSPORTED	DESTINATION SERVED	CARGO TRANSPORTED	COUNTRIES REACHED
6,305	43	29,960 m³	137

WFP REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

WFP has released new projections of the number of people in countries where WFP has presence who could be acutely food insecure by the end of 2020.

- In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, COVID-19, consecutive drought, political and economic instability and the looming hurricane season are set to take a devastating toll. A projected 16 million people will be at risk of missing meals due to the pandemic in 2020, the highest relative increase in food insecurity of any region. In **Haiti**, WFP is scaling up its emergency assistance from 700,000 people to 1.3 million people to be assisted over the next 12 months.
- In **Asia and the Pacific**, the number of people facing hunger could be pushed to 49.6 million people, with concern for countries highly dependent on food imports and remittances, for economies reliant on exports, and for those who work in informal labour sectors. 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 the **Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa**, 53 million people could soon be struggling to feed themselves, driven by conflict and violence, earlier socio-economic shocks, and loss of income. Movement restrictions, lockdowns, trade barriers and unusual consumer behaviour are resulting in changing price levels and inflation. In **Yemen**, WFP will focus on sustaining critical support to nearly half the population in the face of enormous obstacles: ongoing conflict, shifting frontlines, severe access challenges, and now COVID-19.
- In **West and Central Africa**, COVID-19's compounding effects could drive 57.5 million people into acute food insecurity. The pandemic is unfolding at the height of the lean season when hunger and malnutrition peak. WFP continues to scale up and prioritize life-saving activities to populations affected by COVID-19, conflicts and the lean season; in the **Central African Republic**, WFP will scale up to support 375,850 more people in urban and peri-urban areas from July to December.
- In **Eastern Africa**, COVID-19 is expected to drive the number of acutely food insecure up to 41.5 million people, heavily affecting the urban poor who rely on informal sources of income. Heavy rains, floods, and the worst desert locust outbreak in decades will have devastating impacts. In **South Sudan**, WFP will extend shock-responsive assistance to an additional 1.6 million of the most vulnerable, market-dependent populations – including 1.1 million people in urban and peri-urban areas and 500,000 people in rural areas.
- In **Southern Africa**, COVID-19 will deepen and increase poverty and food insecurity, aggravated by extreme climatic events, chronic malnutrition, and macro-economic shocks. An initial analysis projects 42 million people will be food insecure in 2020; should a worst-case scenario materialize this figure could rise to 52.4 million. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, WFP plans to support an additional 945,131 people not yet supported through existing food security safety nets in the areas where WFP and its partners have presence.



Countries and sub-regions where low resource levels, important life-saving needs, and COVID-19 intersect with compounding risks in the coming 6-month horizon are highlighted by WFP's Corporate Alert System.

High-risk countries are Afghanistan, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Central Sahel Region (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger), Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and Zimbabwe. Medium-risk countries are Chad, Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Mozambique, countries affected by the hurricane season (the Caribbean, Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua) and countries affected by the Venezuelan migrant crisis (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru).

Securing buffer resources for these operations and ensuring funds are available in WFP's Immediate Response Account is critical to enabling WFP's operational support as well as WFP's readiness.

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

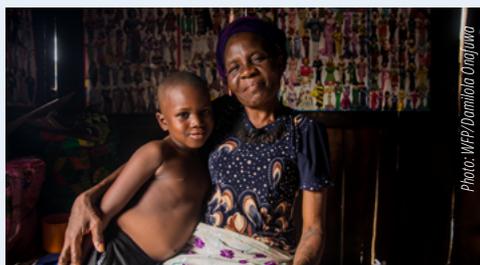
Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

The largest humanitarian response in WFP history requires **US\$ 4.9 billion** in net funding requirements across 83 operations through the end of 2020 to mitigate and respond to the immediate consequences of COVID-19. This represents 62 percent of the total budget required through the end of 2020, including an additional **US\$ 1.7 billion in scale-up requirements**, with 94 percent dedicated to crisis response.

Only one-third (28) of WFP's 83 operations are currently funded at 50 percent or more. Critically, **33 operations have six-month funding shortfalls above 50 percent**, and more alarmingly, **20 operations have shortfalls above 75 percent**. Funds are urgently required as needs are peaking over the next three months from July to September.

WFP is appealing for funding to ramp up to assist up to 138 million people in 2020 to mitigate and respond to the socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable – structured around three pillars:

- **Sustain critical assistance to WFP's 100 million pre-COVID targeted beneficiaries** through alternative means of assistance,
- **Scale-up to support up to 38 million additional people** on the brink of acute food insecurity due to COVID-19 compounded impacts, and
- **Support governments and partners in their COVID-19 response** through provision of technical assistance, tangible assets and services, and complementary support.



WFP Global Response to COVID-19, June 2020: This June 2020 update provides a snapshot of the measures WFP has put in place to sustain its operations amidst an unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. It gives up-to-date projections of food security needs due to the economic impacts and measures taken to contain the virus, WFP's scale-up plan to address needs, and how WFP is partnering with governments in this joint effort.

The new global response plan encompasses all of WFP's work over the next six months. As the full effect of COVID-19 continues to emerge, medium and longer-term impacts of the crisis are yet to be fully understood. WFP plans will be continuously updated in collaboration with governments and partners to support national systems and communities. WFP's new strategic plan will clearly define our added value in both humanitarian and development space, including the element of strategic partnerships.

In addition, WFP's [common logistics support services](#) for the global humanitarian response to COVID-19 will grind to a halt in mid-July if significant funding does not come forward. To ensure continuity of operations, WFP requires immediate contributions against US\$ 965 million requirement for 2020; to date, US\$ 142 million has been received. Without significant new funding, flights will be grounded, humanitarian and health workers will struggle to reach frontline operations, and life-saving supplies will not get to the countries where they are needed the most.

As a voluntary funded organization, WFP values all types of funding, including funds earmarked for specific operations, which is consistently provided by our top donors. This enables us to respond at speed and scale, especially for humanitarian response. At the same time, we also value multi-year funding, critical for humanitarian response but also in particular for our resilience and root cause engagement.

WFP appreciates the flexible funding it has received to date from its donors, and so far in 2020, WFP has been able to allocate nearly US\$ 315 million dollars in multilateral contributions. Of this amount, 248 million was allocated to nearly 55 countries which has been crucial in enabling humanitarian response, sustain critical food assistance, and reach the most vulnerable faced by COVID-19.

WFP Operations

Since the declaration of the pandemic, WFP immediately put in place measures to **safeguard assistance to its existing 100 million beneficiaries**, and to minimize the possible risk of infection to the people we serve, partners and staff. Amidst COVID-19 disruptions to supply chains and operations between March and May, WFP:

- Scaled-up support to government social protection systems in **49 countries**,
- Adapted its ways of operating to ensure uninterrupted life-saving assistance, for example, shifting WFP school meals to take-home rations for **6.2 million children** and adjusting livelihood programmes for social distancing,
- Identified local alternatives to specialized nutritious foods to mitigate the global supply shortfalls, including procuring **441,000 metric tonnes of food** locally and from smallholder farmers (22 percent more than last year),
- Disbursed **US\$ 524 million in cash-based transfers** across 56 countries and maximized WFP's digital payment systems to serve 10 million unique beneficiaries – the most to date.

WFP is resuming programmatic activities that were suspended due to COVID-19. In **Afghanistan**, most paused Food for Assets (FFA) programmes have now resumed since 1 July, with strict physical distancing protocols. WFP has also resumed most vocational skills training projects. In **Libya**, two municipal councils have requested WFP to restart its Food for Training activities if appropriate COVID-19 protection measures are guaranteed. In **Senegal**, WFP will provide 62,000 people with e-cash as part of the Food for Assets activity during the lean season response in July for 3 months.

Assistance to populations under quarantine continues. In **Myanmar**, WFP has provided food assistance to 40,800 returning migrants at borders and quarantine centres in several states. In **Lao PDR**, WFP, together with World Vision, provided food assistance to the largest quarantine camp in Savannakhet Province.

WFP continues to reach new beneficiaries. In **Kenya**, WFP plans to complement ongoing government assistance to urban families by providing cash to 250,000 people living in informal settlements in Nairobi for the next three months. The **Dominican Republic** country office is preparing a Field Level Agreement with the IFRC to distribute cash to undocumented migrants as part of the COVID-19 response.

SCHOOL FEEDING

At the peak of the crisis, nearly 370 million schoolchildren missed out on school meals due to school closures – including 13 million children who receive school meals from WFP.

WFP continues to **provide support to nearly half (48 percent) of the 12.8 million school children** that it planned to reach globally in countries with school closures. In three-quarters of these countries, support has been provided through in-kind take-home rations, whereas in the remaining quarter, cash transfers or a combination of cash transfers and take-home rations, or on-site meals has been supplied.

WFP **will resume its school-feeding programmes** as schools gradually reopen. In the **Republic of Congo**, the National Education Cluster, of which WFP is a part, will receive US\$ 7 million from the Global Partnership for Education to finance school feeding programmes as part of the COVID-19 response. Meanwhile, in **Malawi**, the National Planning Taskforce for reopening schools, colleges and universities has recommended that all educational institutions reopen from 13 July.



No school does not mean no meal

Take-Home rations are helping ensure refugee children still have something to eat as they wait to return to classrooms in Rwanda.

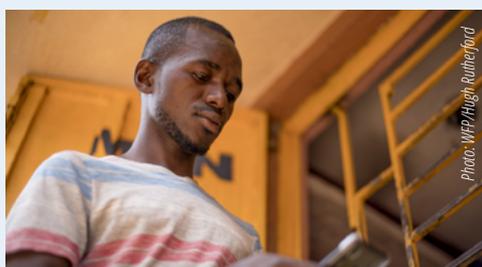
NUTRITION

COVID-19 is undermining nutrition among the world's most vulnerable people - particularly children, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and people living with HIV/TB. It is important that during the COVID-19 crisis, caution is given to a potential increase in malnutrition, in addition to the vulnerability of those with compromised immune systems who would be more susceptible to developing the disease.

[The 2020 Global Nutrition Report](#) (GNR) was launched on 1 July in an online event hosted by United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and Food and Agriculture Organization, bringing together key stakeholders from various Rome-based agencies, including WFP's Director of Nutrition Lauren Landis. The event focused on nutritional inequities, examining synergies between the GNR's own findings and the UNSCN's [periodic review](#) that extensively explored equity in food systems.

CASH-BASED TRANSFERS

Half of WFP's global plan to COVID-19 will be delivered in cash and vouchers - particularly in urban communities allowing them to obtain their food needs from local markets while providing a stimulus to economies. WFP continues to provide support to governments in 28 countries to strengthen national cash-based transfer programmes and ensure business continuity. In 20 of these countries, engagement is more advanced: WFP has either delivered transfers with or for governments, is finalizing agreements for technical assistance or complementary support, or has just received confirmed funding from donors for this type of support.



[“The problem with coronavirus is it came suddenly”](#)

WFP is providing cash in Uganda's capital Kampala to 80,000 refugees living in informal settlements who have been hard hit by the consequences of COVID-19. Photo: WFP/Hugh Rutherford.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

WFP is expanding social protection programmes to safeguard the millions of people at risk of slipping into hunger in 2020 due to the pandemic. Drawing on WFP's technical expertise and decades of experience in safety net programming, a new [external briefing note](#) outlines WFP's value proposition to support governments in designing and delivering large-scale responses to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. For additional guidance, WFP's social protection unit published 10 tips to improve the shock-responsiveness of social protection programmes.

WFP launched its '[COVID-19 and conflict sensitivity - rapid operational conflict risk and prevention tool](#)' to support field teams to conduct rapid conflict analysis, identify potential conflict risks associated with the COVID-19 response, and possible mitigation measures to consider when designing and implementing activities. The tool draws on consultations with WFP's six Regional Bureaux, several country offices and HQ divisions, and accompanies [WFP's Medium-Term Programme Framework \(MTPF\)](#) in responding to the development emergency caused by COVID-19.

INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

A new [microsite](#) illustrates how innovation, technology and digital transformation help WFP rapidly respond to the effects of COVID-19, while maintaining existing operations.

- WFP is harnessing [leading-edge data integration software](#) to safely and securely deliver life-saving humanitarian and health cargo from over 90 humanitarian organisations to more than 85 countries grappling with COVID-19. The software, known as DOTS, allows WFP to pinpoint potential disruptions to delivery and develop solutions to save time and money for the humanitarian community.
- [Blockchain technology](#) provides close to 400,000 refugees across Jordan and Bangladesh a single contactless point of access to assistance from WFP and other humanitarian organizations.
- The WFP-led [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster](#) is deploying helpline chatbots powered by machine learning to provide easy access to accurate health and safety information in Iraq, Libya and the Central African Republic.
- WFP's fundraising app, [ShareTheMeal](#), has reached its first two COVID-19 fundraising goals thanks to a donor base of over 2 million people worldwide.

SUPPLY CHAIN

WFP is continuing to ensure that vital food supplies get to where they're needed most despite challenging circumstances. **WFP has moved 275,000 metric tonnes of food along the corridors in East Africa so far this year**, up 42,000 metric tonnes on the same period last year. All countries in the region have also facilitated double distributions of food to minimize large gatherings and limit the spread of COVID-19, as well as ensured that two months stocks of food are available in or near refugee camps to ensure no disruption to WFP operations in the event of a lockdown or quarantine.

Delays continue to be seen across WFP's supply chain both at upstream and downstream levels. Due to movement restrictions and limited flights, courier services are finding it challenging to send food samples to laboratories for testing, resulting in delays in WFP receiving analysis results. Similarly, delays are also being seen for the issuance of cargo and other key documents such as phytosanitary and radiation certificates.

Downstream, several countries have implemented strict measures to control the spread of COVID-19 across borders due to many positive cases reported among truck drivers. These measures include testing requirements, transshipment and in some instances, full border closures such as those between Kenya and Tanzania. Discussions ongoing between the two governments have now led to the re-opening of the Namanga border crossing under the condition that all truck drivers adhere to mandatory testing. Ports remain operational although some continue to maintain a 14-day quarantine period, while others have seen minor delays related to the clearance of cargo.



To deal with heightened needs, WFP has so far purchased an additional 500,000 metric tonnes of food, an increase of 31 percent over the same period in 2019. WFP has maintained a steady level (approximately 70 percent) of its target prepositioning of food, representing a one-month supply and three-month buffer stock. Based on requirements, East and West Africa have the healthiest supply outlooks, compared to Latin America, where there are lower stocks of food.

In addition to its own operations, WFP continues to provide **supply chain support to governments where requested**, through technical support and advice, logistics infrastructure, and the provision of supply chain services. WFP has also supported many countries through the donation of mobile storage units to governments or health partners, which are being repurposed as isolation units for COVID-19 patients or as screening areas at border entry points as seen in Malawi, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Bangladesh among others, and in some countries is assisting in the collection of COVID-19 samples through UNHAS operations.

CIVIL-MILITARY

When the operational requirements, contextual constraints, and timeliness of the response overwhelm traditional commercial options; military assets can – as a last resort – be used for a limited time to support WFP operations. **WFP has significantly increased its Humanitarian-Military Interaction efforts** in support of the organization's COVID-19 response and particularly the common services available to the humanitarian community. This effort has been channelled primarily through a request to Member States, on a no-regrets basis, for Military and Civil Defence Assets to support the global emergency response.

Since then, there have been ongoing negotiations with **five different member states** who have expressed interest in supporting the operation with air assets that have been and will be used to transport critical cargo, on behalf of WFP and partners, to regional hubs or specific countries. Last month, the United Arab Emirates provided a C-17 Globemaster that was used to transport a field hospital from Norway to the Accra hub. More flights should materialize over the course of June / July as more assets are made available to WFP. On 27 June, the UK's Royal Air Force will begin moving a dedicated COVID-19 field hospital from the UK to Accra, Ghana. The transport of this hospital is expected to take four flights.

LESSONS LEARNED AND REAL-TIME ASSURANCE

At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, **WFP initiated an active Lessons Learned exercise**, taking continuous stock of how WFP is responding to the global crisis from a corporate perspective. This inter-functional exercise aims to document the bottlenecks as well as examples of best practices for immediate, real-time and future corporate learning. The global scope and wide-ranging impact of COVID-19 presents uncharted territory for WFP, offering an opportunity to stress-test some of WFP's existing emergency response mechanisms and showcase the organization's ability to rapidly adapt to ever changing circumstances.

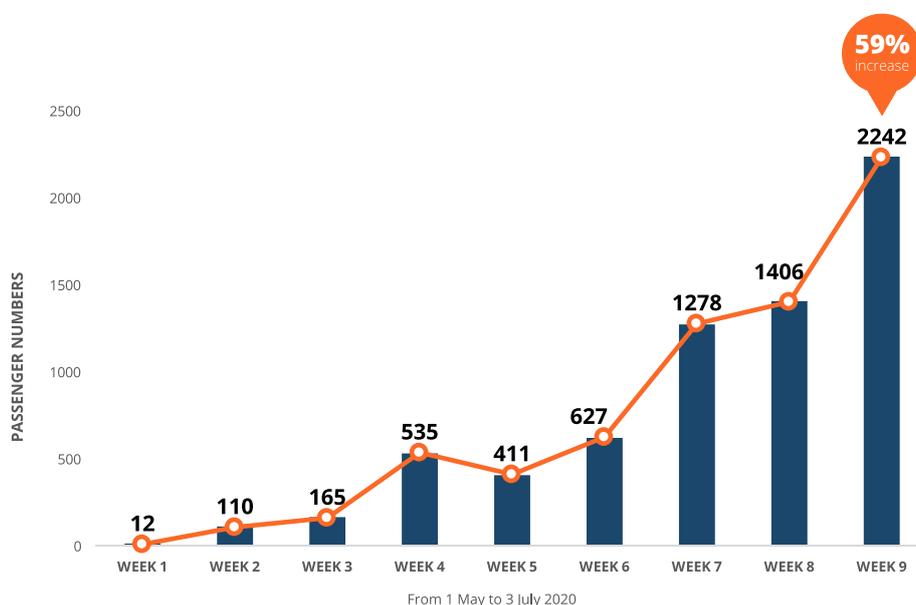
WFP's Office of Internal Audit has also been assigned to provide Real-time Assurance on WFP's Level 3 COVID-19 Emergency Response. The primary objectives of the assignment are to assess the governance and design of the framework in place for the COVID-19 emergency, to identify areas where controls may necessarily have been amended or waived, and to assess the actions taken in order to keep these risks at a reasonable level in the context of the emergency. The results and outputs of the assignment will feed into an overall audit and capping report on WFP's COVID-19 emergency response, provisionally planned for the final quarter of 2020.

Common Services

With much of the world's commercial transport systems, particularly airlines, grounded by COVID-19, WFP - the world's largest humanitarian organization fighting hunger and a global leader in logistics - has stepped in to move passengers and huge volumes of health and other supplies needed in the fight against the pandemic.

WFP's air passenger service continues to see significant increases in demand. Over **43 destinations** through Africa, Asia and the Middle East are now served with an additional eight expected to see their first flights by early July and negotiations ongoing for others. To-date a total of **6,305 passengers from a total of 186 organizations** have been transported by WFP's service over the course of **433 flights**. The service is now transporting **over 1,000 passengers per week** to destinations that would otherwise not be accessible through commercial means. WFP continues to monitor the commercial sector as it slowly comes back online, and where safe and reliable options become available, WFP flights will cease, as already seen in Tanzania and South Sudan. To ensure efficient use of air assets, wherever possible passenger flights are also used to transport cargo.

WFP Aviation has been working closely with the Humanitarian Response Hub team to further enhance the customer experience for those using WFP's air passenger service, now launching the ability to search and book flights directly through the hub. The new service will allow travel focal points to easily plan their trips by browsing available flight options, submitting booking requests, uploading detailed travel information along with attachment or multiple attachments in zip format, approving and rejecting booking requests and downloading real time booking reports. The latest information on destinations and schedules can be found on the [Humanitarian Booking Hub](#) and in this short [video](#).



As with passenger services, demand for WFP's cargo movement services continues to grow, showing a steep increase week to week. A total of **26,960 m³ of cargo** has been dispatched to-date through WFP's network of humanitarian response hubs to **137 countries on behalf of 39 organizations, 15,332 m³ of which has been transported via WFP's free-to-user cargo services** as part of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. An **additional 15,631 m³ of cargo** has been requested for movement to **117 countries** via the Emergency Service Marketplace, while planning figures from the WFP's COVID-19 Cell in Geneva show an expected **79,000 m³ of allocated cargo over the next six weeks**, of which it only has sufficient funding to transport **56,000 m³**.

GLOBAL DISPATCHES OF COVID-19 ITEMS THROUGH WFP HUBS m³

(Bilateral Service Provision, UNHRD and Free to user)

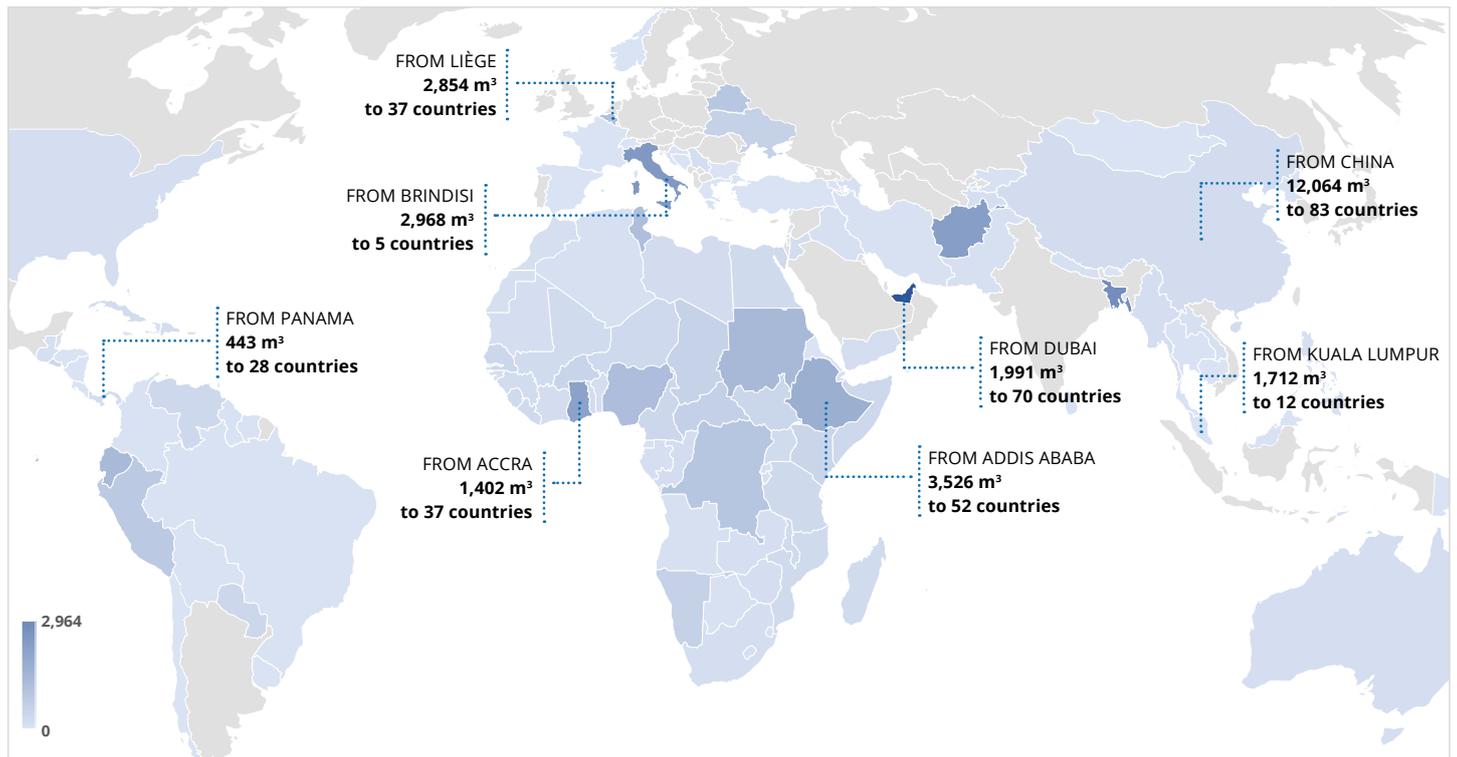


Photo: WFP/Michael Dokwa

World Food Programme harnesses data and tech to save lives

The Emergency Service Marketplace is a seamless and integrated one-stop-shop for humanitarian partners to rapidly deliver supplies that are saving lives during emergencies.

UN MEDEVAC CELL

WFP continues to play a key role in the UN Medevac Cell, which manages and coordinates all COVID-19 medevac requests for UN and INGO personnel. WFP has access to a global network of contracted air ambulances which have so far carried out **25 medevacs of UN staff**.

WFP also has three aviation experts dedicated to COVID-19 medevacs based out of the Strategic Air Operations Centre in Brindisi, Italy in close coordination with the Aviation arm of the United Nations Department of Operational Support (UNDOS).

Five strategic regional treatment locations are being established and formalized by the UN to be able to receive eligible personnel or dependents who require COVID-19 related medical evacuation. As part of this, **WFP has constructed two COVID-19 field hospitals in Addis Ababa and Accra**. The 68-bed field hospital in Accra is equipped with essential infrastructure including beds and two road ambulances and is being handed over to the World Health Organization, which is contracting logistics support and medical personnel to operate the hospital. WFP has also completed construction of a 92-bed COVID-19 field hospital in Addis Ababa, with two road ambulances in place. Discussions are ongoing as to which needs this facility will fulfill.

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



Photo: WFP/Michael Dokwa

Regional Updates

Regional Bureau Bangkok

In **Asia and the Pacific**, the number of **people facing acute food insecurity is projected to increase by 22.5 million**. The crisis strongly affects those who work in casual, informal labour in vulnerable sectors like tourism in countries like **Cambodia** and **Pacific island countries**, the garment industry in countries like **Bangladesh**, and those who rely on remittances in countries like **Nepal**. The increasing frequency and severity of natural hazards such as monsoon floods, cyclone, and drought, a new locust invasion in **Pakistan** and **Afghanistan**, and gender-based inequality exacerbate the situation.

WFP is scaling up its plans to reach 5.2 million new beneficiaries through targeted COVID-19 responses in the second half of 2020. This includes food assistance to the large numbers of returning migrants and people in quarantine sites in **Bangladesh, Laos, Myanmar and Nepal**. In **Myanmar**, for example, WFP has already reached 60,700 people inside or in-transit to quarantine sites. WFP is also planning large-scale assistance to vulnerable populations affected by COVID-19 in rural and urban areas, such as in **Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan**. For example, in **Pakistan**, WFP reallocated funds to assist over 120,000 people, with up to 70 percent through cash-based transfers, with the first distributions are scheduled for July.

WFP continues to deliver lifesaving **food and nutrition support** for a planned 5.6 million beneficiaries in July in several countries, including **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Pakistan**, with various modifications, such as providing one- or two-months' worth of distributions or revising standard operating procedures.

While school closures across the region have meant a suspension of **school feeding programmes**, WFP has now reached over 543,000 children with adjusted modalities such as take-home rations and cash-based transfers, in **Cambodia, Lao PDR, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Myanmar**.

Regional Bureau Cairo

In the **Middle East and North Africa**, the number of food-insecure people in the region due to COVID-19 are projected to increase by 29 percent (11.9 million people) to **53 million people** in 2020.

The economies of more than half of the countries in region are expected to contract significantly in 2020 as the negative spill-over of COVID-19 has compound already challenging economic situations. Particularly affected countries are **Libya** (-19.4 percent GDP growth), **Lebanon** (-8.4 percent) and **Sudan** (-7.2 percent).

With little to no savings, no unemployment insurance, and reduced food subsidies, people who engage in subsistence or informal work to support their families cannot endure sustained lockdowns or interruption to their livelihoods. Movement restrictions, lockdowns, trade barriers, among other factors, are impacting commodity price levels and inflation in some areas. The region's heavy dependence on oil and gas exports and on food imports leaves it sensitive to price fluctuations and trade restrictions.

In line with the 'three pillars' of the Global Response to COVID-19, WFP will first sustain the critical caseload of people assisted in the region and particularly in **Yemen, Syria and Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq**.

Second, critical operations will also extend to newly identified caseloads which include wage labourers, migrant workers and small traders who have lost their livelihoods and need emergency food assistance to carry them over until livelihoods start to recover. Of **highest priority are Sudan, Syria, Turkey and Lebanon** where significant numbers have been newly identified, requiring direct support by WFP. In addition, **needs are high in Egypt, Palestine, Libya, Jordan and Iraq**.

Third, WFP will support the governments in the region, particularly by strengthening social safety net programmes. WFP's school feeding programmes constitute a significant contribution to social protection in many countries. It is essential to adapt national school feeding programmes, ensuring that families with children continue to receive support. Currently, some 4.1 million children continue to receive support through take-home rations and/or cash-based transfers out of the 4.4 million who WFP supported in the region pre-COVID-19.

All country offices in the region are now implementing cash-based transfers in one or more of their programmes, representing 60 percent of WFP's global cash-based transfer operations.

**Regional Bureau
Dakar**

In **West Africa**, COVID-19 threatens to exacerbate the humanitarian situation aggravated by armed conflict, population displacement and climate change that has already resulted in growing rates of hunger and malnutrition. COVID-19 has emerged at the peak of the lean season when hunger and malnutrition are most severe. Prior to the pandemic, 21.1 million were estimated to struggle to meet their food needs from June to August. WFP estimates that the number of acutely food insecure people could more than double to 57.6 million. WFP and UNICEF further estimate that 11.6 million children will be acutely malnourished in the region in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, an 18 percent increase on pre-COVID levels.

Many of the newly food insecure people the region are the urban poor who lost their employment and depend on markets for food, with little ability to store food. Border closures and the suspension of markets across the region have led to reduced regional trade. Price increases between 15-25 percent were observed in April in the **Central African Republic, Chad and Nigeria**. Due to conflict, violence and insecurity, many people across the region have been displaced, especially in **Central Sahel, Central African Republic, northeast Nigeria**, and southwest and northwest **Cameroon**. WFP is also ensuring assistance to these vulnerable populations continue.

WFP plans to assist 23 million people in the region with lifesaving food and nutrition support as well as through lifechanging resilience and livelihoods projects. This is an 8.9 million increase from the initial plan at the start of the year. WFP is supporting government-led assistance to cushion the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 through national social protection systems and targeted food assistance. In **Chad**, WFP will provide food assistance for three months to more than 433,000 people as part of the government's World Bank-funded Food Security and Response Plan.

Country offices in the region are scaling up cash-based transfers to provide assistance during the lean season, linked in part to the higher urban nature of the COVID-19 response. Cash-based transfers are adjusted when necessary to adapt to the market context and/or top-up to cover additional basic needs due to COVID-19. In **Senegal**, WFP will provide 62,000 people with e-cash for the Food for Assets (FFA) activity for the lean season response in July for 3 months. WFP will also provide 93,000 students with cash transfers through mobile money from mid-June for 2 months.

In countries where schools are closed, WFP is working with governments to put in place alternatives, like take-home rations, home delivery of food, and providing cash or vouchers - such as in **Nigeria**, where WFP is providing technical guidance to adjust the national home-grown school feeding programme, supporting the government to reach 9 million children. Where schools have re-opened, WFP has re-started school feeding such as in **Côte d'Ivoire** supporting about 132,000 children in the rural west, north and northeast regions.

**Regional Bureau
Johannesburg**

In **Southern Africa**, hunger is driven by the impacts of ongoing drought, flooding, conflict or economic crisis, with the pandemic amplifying deep-rooted structural challenges underpinning the region's protracted hunger crises. The region experienced normal rainfall only once in the last five cropping seasons, and in 2019, repeated extreme climatic shocks resulted in the highest peak acute food insecurity of the past decade.

COVID-19 is deepening and widening hunger in the region. Pending the results of imminent national vulnerability assessments, WFP analysis indicates that in the 12 Southern African countries where WFP operates, at least 42 million people will need food assistance in the next 12 months. In a worst-case scenario with widespread economic disruption, declining remittances, severe deterioration in terms of trade, and health impacts, that number could reach **52 million**, nearly double the pre-COVID projection of 27.5 million.

Strengthening and expanding government social protection systems is vital in the COVID-19 period, and beyond. With the pandemic in **Southern Africa** yet to peak, and the socio-economic impacts set to outweigh and outlast the health impacts, much more support for safety nets is vital if looming hunger catastrophes in the region are to be averted. The coverage of existing social safety net programmes in the region is limited, and often lacks a food security dimension.

**Regional Bureau
Johannesburg**

WFP is rolling out cash-based assistance to communities in urban settings, including 250,000 in **Madagascar**, 500,000 people in **Mozambique**, 300,000 people in the **Republic of Congo**, one million people in **Zambia**, and 300,000 people in **Zimbabwe**.

In **Democratic Republic of Congo** WFP is increasing the number of people it assists this year by almost one million to address increasing food needs linked to COVID-19, to over 8.5 million.

The unmet funding needs for the next six months (July-December) for all WFP operations in the 12 Southern African countries WFP works in amounts to US\$ 881 million. Three-quarters of the shortfall is accounted for by our three biggest operations: **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe and Mozambique**. Still, owing to COVID-19, needs in smaller countries – **Namibia, Lesotho and Eswatini** among them – are accelerating more rapidly.

**Regional Bureau
Nairobi**

In **East Africa**, the socio-economic impact of the pandemic continues to affect poor urban households; some 50 percent of the urban population in the region live in informal urban settlements with majority relying on informal day-to-day employment. The region is grappling with 'triple threat': COVID-19, floods and locust outbreak in the Horn of Africa. Some 1.3 million people have been affected by floods and some 481,000 displaced. WFP estimates that some 24 million people are food insecure in the region, including 3.3 million refugees and 6.2 million internally displaced persons. WFP projects that the number of food secure people could rise by 17.5 million, reflecting a 73 percent increase of the estimated food insecure population. In response, WFP is planning to assist 3.9 million additional people.

WFP continues to work with governments on COVID-19 response plans to meet the needs of vulnerable urban populations. In **South Sudan**, WFP has reached more than 3.7 million people and continues to work with partners to respond to the humanitarian crisis, which could further be exacerbated by the pandemic. WFP is planning to expand its programming in urban areas, to capture new populations not covered under WFP or any other large-scale safety-net package. WFP's newly designed conflict-sensitive, in-kind food assistance targets 1.6 million people predominately located in urban areas. In **Kenya**, WFP is planning a cash transfer programme for urban settlements in Nairobi, aimed at providing relief to 63,300 families facing loss of income and livelihoods. In **Somalia**, WFP will support the government in implementing cash-based transfers to respond to unexpected financing gaps as a result of COVID-19, flooding, and desert locusts, thanks a US\$55 million fund from the World Bank. In parallel, WFP home deliveries using the e-Shop App have now been expanded to all key locations across the country, reaching almost 8,000 beneficiaries since April, with sales amounting to over \$2 million.

Except for **Burundi**, countries in East Africa have undertaken nationwide school closures to mitigate the virus. Most governments are currently putting in place preventive and control measures as they prepare for the back to learning process, with **Kenya and Rwanda** foreseeing September 2020 as the possible earliest date for schools reopening. To safeguard the health and nutrition status of the school going children, some of whom rely on the school feeding programmes, WFP is working with the government to provide alternate distribution modalities. In June, WFP is distributing take home rations to 63,000 in **Ethiopia**, 80,000 in **Rwanda**, 40,000 children in Somaliland, and in communities in locations targeted by school feeding programmes in **South Sudan**. Although learning is suspended **Djibouti**, children are still accessing meals from some rural schools, with plans to provide take-home rations.

WFP resilience activities are critical in supporting and contributing to socio-economic recovery of the populations. WFP has maintained the activities while introducing COVID-19 safety measures. In **Uganda**, WFP is adopting a revised approach to asset creation and livelihoods activities for Isingiro and Karamoja to better adapt and respond to COVID-19. WFP **Rwanda** plans to launch resilient livelihoods activities in five districts in July in collaboration with the government.

**Regional Bureau
Panama**

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the number of people facing hunger in the region could quadruple to 16 million, representing the highest relative increase in food insecurity amongst all regions, standing at 269 percent. High levels of inequality, rapid urbanization, high dependence on informal workers, governance issues, and an exposed fragile economy continue to contribute to increases in COVID-19 cases. This is compounding people's vulnerabilities and increasing social unrest and political instability. There is particular concern for **Haiti, the Dry Corridor of Central America, and Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru**. The situation of workers employed in the informal sector is particularly worrisome, as many are not covered by any social protection programmes.

WFP continues to scale up and adapt activities to ensure that it continues to meet the immediate needs created by the crisis. For the first time, WFP has deployed a rapid emergency response in the Colombian Amazon region, where some 5,000 of the most vulnerable people, primarily indigenous, received in-kind food airlifted to the area, due to complex access.

In **Honduras**, WFP is working to assist 600,000 additional people who could face hunger due to COVID-19, including people in isolation centres and urban areas in quarantine. Take-home rations distributions are ongoing, reaching remote regions.

Cash-based transfer activities are expanding as well. In **Peru**, the first cash distribution took place in Ancash, one of the most affected regions. In **Colombia**, cash transfers for migrants and host communities continue in Bogotá and have also started as part of the WFP's shock responsive social protection pilot project, aiming at strengthening existing social protection systems and support some 45,000 Venezuelan migrants and Colombians in extreme poverty. In **Guatemala**, WFP is finalizing preparations for cash-based transfers for 180,000 people, complementing the government's assistance. In rural areas of **Honduras**, WFP has reached 99 percent of planned cash-based transfer beneficiaries as part of the COVID-19 response plan; in urban areas, WFP reached 75 percent of the planned beneficiaries with in-kind assistance and 86 percent with cash-based transfers.