

Highlights

A toxic mix of conflict, economic decline, climate extremes and the socio-economic fallout from the Coronavirus pandemic are driving people into a deepening phase of extreme food insecurity, according to the [Early Warning Analysis of Acute Food Insecurity Hotspots report](#), published jointly by FAO and WFP. In the coming months, famine is a real risk in parts of four countries: **Burkina Faso, (Northeast) Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen**. **The socio-economic impact of the pandemic is proving to be more disastrous than the actual virus in many countries. In Latin America, hunger has quadrupled** in countries WFP operates, and the region is experiencing the worst recession in 100 years.

WFP has begun to phase down its free-to-user cargo services due to improvements in commercial transport markets and revised pipeline figures demonstrating a lower quantity of response items requiring transport than first expected. Given the unpredictability of COVID-19 and its impacts, WFP stands ready to resume any discontinued services should the need arise and based on funding availability. WFP's existing mechanisms to support and enable the humanitarian community through mandated services in-country such as the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) and the Logistics Cluster; as well as the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot network (UNHRD) and WFP's bilateral service provision (BSP) offering will remain available as required.

WFP's [Cost of a Plate of Food](#) report reflects underlying inequalities between people in developing and richer countries, worsened by COVID-19. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa feature heavily in the latest report, with 17 of the top 20 in the report drawn from this region.

As of end of October, WFP has confirmed US\$ 275.5 million in financing sourced from International Financial Institutions (IFIs), as well as an additional US\$ 117.5 million pending final approval by national governments. Compared to the US\$ 21 million confirmed in 2019, these figures signify a substantial increase in WFP's scale and scope of engagement with IFIs. Nearly half of financing sourced from IFIs in 2020 is linked to the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

The World Bank Board approved an [envelope](#) of US\$ 12 billion for countries to finance the purchase and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments. This support will be available to IDA/IBRD eligible countries and will build on the COVID-19 emergency response programs already in place in 111 countries. The aim of the project is to support COVID-19 vaccination of 1 billion people globally.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Asia and the Pacific: COVID-19 is compounding the risks already faced in many parts of the region due to escalating conflict and extreme weather events. In the current monsoon season, several countries have already been impacted by floods and landslides. Preparations for heavy rain and the upcoming winter are even more difficult than usual and funding remains stretched for critical operations such as **Myanmar** and **Afghanistan**. Significant scale-up is under way for **Afghanistan** and **Bangladesh**. In **Bangladesh**, WFP is increasing its operation to 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. Out of these, WFP has so far reached over 530,000 people affected by COVID-19 in the host community in Cox's Bazar.



Photo: WFP/Massoud Hossain

[Afghanistan: How WFP cash assistance empowers women](#)

World Food Programme supports women in urban and rural communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

East Africa: In East Africa, the food security situation remains alarming with the compounding impact of conflict, floods, locust outbreak and socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Further, a new generation of breeding swarms in **Ethiopia** and **Somalia** has heightened concerns of widespread infestation in East Africa and threaten food production and livelihoods. In the region, WFP continues to support social protection programmes and urban safety nets to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable communities. In **Kenya**, WFP reached 56,000 households (205,000 people) in the Nairobi informal settlements impacted by the economic effects of the pandemic through Cash Based Transfers (CBT). Further, WFP has also expanded the COVID-19 urban response to Mombasa County. WFP plans to reach up to 90,000 people with food assistance through cash transfers for three months.

Latin America and the Caribbean: As the region contends with over 2.5 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, security constraints, ongoing political developments and climate shocks continue to trigger socio-economic instabilities and population displacement, impacting the delivery of WFP assistance. Recent political developments risks are putting further strain on insecurity across the region. Social mobilizations were reported throughout **Bolivia** in recent weeks, in particular on 21 October, following the victory of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) in the presidential [elections](#).

Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa: WFP targeting in the region due to COVID-19 has increased from 9.4 million to 9.8 million. The pandemic has highlighted the **urgency for national governments to expedite progress in building and extending social protection systems to cushion the socio-economic impact of the crisis**. Moreover, **Livelihood and resilience building** activities have resumed in most countries in the region with risk mitigation measures in place to sustain the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people against the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. In **Palestine**, as part of resilience strengthening activities, WFP and the NGO ARIJ finalized the selection of 100 families in the West Bank who will receive climate-smart agricultural assets including hydroponics, livestock and home gardens. In **Kyrgyzstan**, WFP completed a pilot programme with participants in 34 villages under the Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE) project.

Southern Africa: The devastating socio-economic fallout from the pandemic continues to unfold, especially in many low-income households in urban areas and poor rural communities, even as most countries gradually ease lockdowns and progressively re-open air, maritime and land traffic to push for economic restorations. Hunger and malnutrition levels in the region remain alarming – particularly in drought-affected areas of **Zimbabwe**, **Mozambique** and **Madagascar**, and conflict zones in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Mozambique** – where some 42 million people are projected to be needing food assistance in the next 12 months in WFP's 12 countries of operation.

West and Central Africa: The West Africa region had **218,959 confirmed COVID-19 cases** as of 2 November 2020, of which 93 percent are recovered cases and less than 6 percent are still active cases. A continuous **downward trend** in number of new cases is reported and the number of active cases decreased by 30 percent since the last reporting period. Countries in the region have further relaxed COVID-19 related restriction measures and primary schools have further reopened in October for the 2020/2021 academic year in **Burkina Faso**, **Cameroon**, **Chad**, **Guinea Bissau**, **Niger**, and **Sierra Leone**.

The security situation remains extremely volatile in several countries of the region, including the **Central Sahel (Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali), Central African Republic (CAR), Cameroon and Nigeria**, with incidents of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) targeting civilians, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and humanitarian workers, which continue to threaten the continuity of WFP's operations. Election-related unrest also continues in **Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire**, where presidential elections took place on 18 October and 31 October respectively.

Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

Following issuance of the September update to the WFP Global Response to COVID-19 plan, more than US\$ 409 million has been received against the US\$ 5.1 billion required to sustain and scale up WFP operations in the wake of the pandemic.

Funding received continues to be irregular across WFP operations and several country offices continue to face significant shortfalls, forcing some operations to prioritize limited resources by deferring plans to scale-up and reducing rations and coverage. Several operations continue to face resourcing constraints, among them in contexts where WFP is responding to needs in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Myanmar, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

The recent revision of the budget for Common Services has reduced total requirements to US\$ 316 million. With the generous support of donors, US\$ 274 million has been funded or made available, leaving US\$ 42 million still required to ensure all remaining cargo in the pipeline can be moved, that passenger services can continue where commercial services remain unavailable, and that capacities can be built at the hubs to ensure that WFP can continue to support partners over the next phase of the response. Should a full scale-up of services be required once again, additional funding may be needed in the future.

WFP continues to engage with the private sector by working to collate intelligence from the private sector, build partnerships and raise awareness in line with WFP's Private Partnerships & Fundraising Strategy 2020-2025. WFP Private Sector partners have stepped up and provided financial and in-kind support to WFP's response to COVID-19. WFP's private sector supporters – including corporates, foundations and individuals – have donated in excess of US\$ 40 million in support of WFP's COVID response, including common services and other programmatic areas.

Amer Daoudi, WFP Senior Director of Operations, and **Margot van der Velden**, WFP Director of Emergencies, held a series of high-level meetings with partners in Geneva including WHO, IOM, MSF, ICRC, the Global Fund and UNHCR this month. Moreover, the WFP Geneva Office and the UK Mission to the UN in Geneva organized a briefing for the G12+ Group of Donors on the WFP COVID-19 response and Common Services.

WFP Operations

43 countries where WFP implements school feeding reopened their schools, including 17 partially. WFP resumed its onsite meals in two thirds of them and is continuing take-home rations distributions in the rest to mitigate risk of contamination during lunch break. For all distributions, WFP followed national protocols for COVID-19 prevention. In 11 countries schools remain closed and in all but 1, schoolchildren receive take-home rations contributing to their daily food and nutrition requirements.

Due to COVID-19, earlier this year plans to conduct face-to-face trainings to enhance capacity among staff to undertake conflict sensitive programming were put on hold. In response, WFP partnered with the [United Nations System Staff College](#) to deliver a range of online trainings in the field of peace and conflict.



Photo: WFP/Nasrullo Ramazonov

[WFP resumes school feeding in Tajikistan amidst COVID-19 crisis](#)

World Food Programme resumes school feeding programme in almost 40 percent of the Central Asian country's schools

With over 250 expressions of interest across all six regions where WFP operates, there is a strong demand among WFP field staff to enhance their understanding of this area of work. Trainings will start in November 2020.

Through its triple role as a technical advisor, service provider and complementary actor, WFP is supporting around 50 governments in response to the socio-economic impacts COVID-19. In Jordan, WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Aid Fund (NAF), allowing the continued provision of technical assistance and support to the NAF expansion programme, complementary support programme and emergency cash assistance programme through 2022. In addition, WFP will transfer US\$ 1.5 million for distribution to beneficiaries eligible for NAF's COVID-19 emergency cash assistance programme. In Dominica, WFP is providing support to the Government to temporarily expand the country's flagship cash transfer programme, the Public Assistance Programme (PAP), through technical assistance and financial resources covering beneficiary transfers, totaling US\$ 776,000. Over 2,000 PAP beneficiaries will receive two top-ups, each valued at US\$ 80.



[Sierra Leone: How cash assistance is helping to secure peace](#)

World Food Programme and UNDP Peacebuilding Fund Project work together to assist communities hit by the pandemic.

Data from **WFP's near real-time remote food security monitoring systems** is now available through the [weekly Hunger and COVID-19 Snapshots](#). Deteriorations in food security have been identified in 13 out of the 27 countries RAM is producing snapshots for. 16.9 million more people are reporting insufficient food consumption compared to one month ago and 10 million more compared to three months ago. The most affected region was **Southern Africa** where the number of people with insufficient food intake has risen by 2 million in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, 1.5 million in **Malawi** and 1.4 million in **Tanzania**.

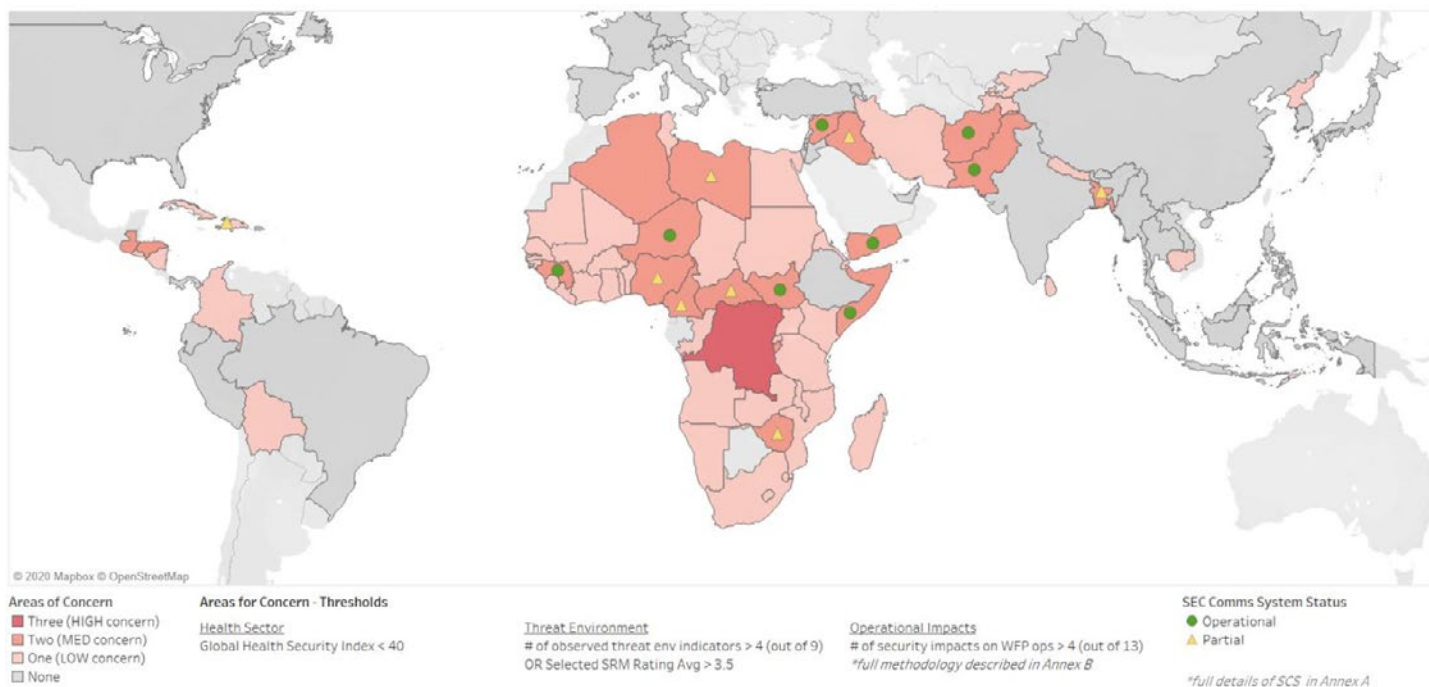
As the impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt across regions, over 40 percent of households in 19 countries are reporting challenges accessing health services, the most impacted countries being **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (74.3%), **Chad** (74.2%) and **Central African Republic** (73.3%). Additionally, 53.1 million households are reporting challenges accessing markets across the countries monitored, notably in **Honduras** (69.2%), **Guatemala** (53.2%) and **Colombia** (48.8%). As a result, an average of 56.4 percent of households are using crisis or emergency livelihood coping strategies with the most common strategies being spending savings, borrowing money or food or reducing non-food expenses.

Access the snapshots through the [HungerMap LIVE](#).

The global response to COVID-19 continues to accelerate government to people (G2P) payments as a go to safety net instrument. According to the World Bank, **17% of the world's population has received cash transfers as part of the global response to COVID-19**. WFP is working with some 35 Governments as a technical partner for their G2P activities.

WFP has transferred US\$ 1.58 billion to vulnerable people and communities across 67 WFP country offices so far this year. As of 28 October 2020, WFP has transferred a total of **US\$ 1.12 billion cash-based transfers (CBT) in emergency response operations**, representing 38.4 percent of interventions in all emergencies. In response to the pandemic, 44 Country Offices are shifting to or scaling up their CBT operations. Governments continue to use CBT to provide economic stimulus and protect people from the economic fallouts of COVID-19, in particular in urban areas. WFP is supporting 32 Governments to set up or expand their cash-based social protection schemes in response to the crisis.

SECURITY



Crime and civil unrest remain the prevailing security threats in the COVID-19 context while armed conflicts and activities by extremist groups continue and even escalate in certain locations despite the pandemic in recent weeks. Politicization of COVID-19 drives security and operational challenges in some countries, leading to heightened risks of political instability that compound WFP's operating environment. The reduced inhibiting context in a number of countries is resulting in security gaps that are exploited by non-state armed groups, extremists or criminals, elevating risks to WFP personnel, operations, assets, and partners supporting WFP.

The level of security concern for the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** remains **High** in the COVID-19 context whereas **20 countries** remain of **medium concern for security**, spread across all WFP regions, with no change since the previous reporting period. Several countries are On Watch (**Lebanon, Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Colombia**).

Three out of 20 countries of medium security concern in the COVID-19 context are scaling up despite their limited funding and buffer stocks: **Haiti, Nigeria and Zimbabwe**. Meanwhile, there are another six countries of medium security concern in the COVID-19 context that face challenges in two of the other operational dimensions (funding, scale-up and buffer stocks): **Bangladesh, Guinea, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen**. These countries will require further attention from a security perspective to ensure that WFP operational objectives are met amidst a deteriorating security context aside from COVID-19.

WFP remains the UN Agency that records the highest number of TRIP Security clearances for official travel, slightly decreasing from 37,611 in September 2020 to 37,160 in October 2020. Furthermore, WFP has recorded an increase in security clearances for official travel in L3 and L2 settings (CAR, Burkina Faso, DRC, Syria) and in Ethiopia due to its strategic location as the Regional Air Hub.

The WFP Security Division has been following up with the UN Department of Safety and Security to spur prompt circulation of the UN Security Management System (UNSMS) guidance on the delivery of the training on Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) in the field during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more details, see the latest WFP COVID-19 Security Situation and Outlook which has been posted on OpWeb ([link](#)).

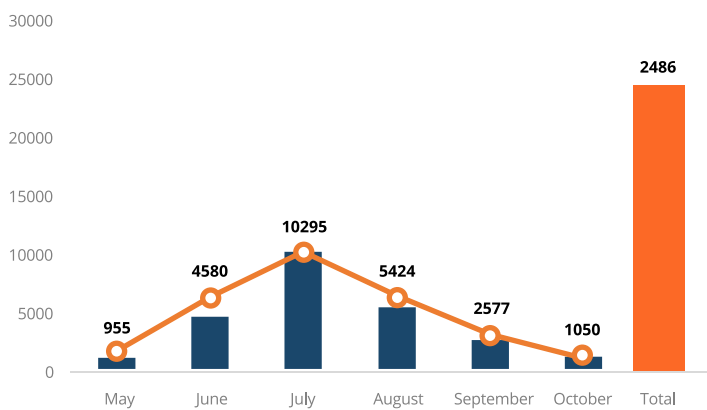
Common Services

WFP passenger services continue to provide a lifeline for the transport of health and humanitarian personnel to key destinations that remain without commercial access. **68 destinations** throughout Africa, the Middle East, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, have now been served since the start of passenger operations, with **25,085 passengers from 396 organizations** to date taking WFP flights as the only way to get where they are needed.

As airspace restrictions have slowly relaxed in some countries and commercial carriers have recommenced operations, WFP has accordingly been able to discontinue flights to **50 destinations**. However, services remain to 17 locations around the world that do not provide safe and reliable commercial options. Based on remaining travel restrictions and the continued spread of the pandemic, WFP foresees that the requirement for its passenger services will continue at least until the end of 2020 to certain locations. Should the situation evolve, stands remains ready to reinstate flights to and from discontinued locations depending on need and availability of funding.

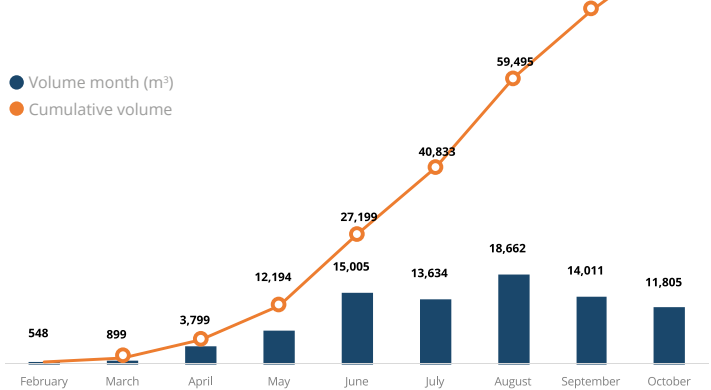
As part of the wider global response to COVID-19, WFP also continues to provide transport for essential COVID-19 cargo on behalf of the humanitarian community. To-date, a total of **87,175 m³** of cargo has been dispatched on behalf of **64 organizations to 171 countries** – enough cargo to fill almost **35 Olympic-sized swimming pools**.

Monthly Passenger Trend, 1 May - 30 October 2020



Monthly Cargo Dispatch Trend

1 February - 31 October 2020
(BSP, UNHRD, Free-to-User)



71,630 m³ of this cargo has been transported via WFP's free-to-user cargo services under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. Thanks to growing improvement of the commercial airfreight market, a more readily available supply of health items and a faster shift to therapeutics and vaccines than anticipated, the initial barriers to the global response to COVID-19 have eased, and WFP is now collaborating with partners to phase down the free-to-user services in coherent stages. At the same time, in line with the uncertainty stemming from the different waves of the pandemic and potential requirements for the coming period, WFP will maintain its strategic capacity to respond to partner needs should this be requested. Meanwhile, existing mandated services will continue alongside cost-recovery services provided through WFP Bilateral Service Provision.

To support all humanitarian and health staff on the frontlines and ensure their ability to "stay and deliver", the UN Secretary-General activated a common COVID-19 Medical Evacuation (medevac) System on 22 May, and a medevac cell was established, leveraging assets from WFP, WHO and the Department of Operational Support (DOS). As co-lead with DOS of the aviation arm of the medevac cell, WFP continues to provide medical evacuations on behalf of the response. The cell has now completed a total of **80 medevacs** – 50 carried out by WFP and 30 by UNDOS - since the unified system was activated.

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

WFP-led and co-led Clusters

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)

The Global ETC team has identified a vendor to support the development of the chatbot solution. The chatbot will enable health partners and humanitarian organizations to communicate and provide accurate country-specific information to affected populations during the COVID-19-related response and beyond.

To support the COVID-19 response in **Bangladesh**, the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) continues to coordinate the provision of critical data connectivity in 22 treatment and isolation centres. So far, eleven sites have been connected with the ETS directly providing connectivity in two IOM-managed sites and ETS partners, including UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) providing connectivity in the other nine.

Despite the restrictions on the movements of humanitarian staff to curb the spread of the virus, the ETS team continues to provide regular maintenance, assessments and installations to ensure the provision of reliable Internet connectivity to the response community across refugee camps in its operational areas in Cox's Bazar.

Operators at a dedicated COVID-19 call centre established by the ETC in Bangui, **Central African Republic (CAR)**, continue to answer calls from the general public to assist the government's response to the pandemic. Operators provide support and advice, while referring cases with COVID-19 symptoms to the Ministry of Health.

In Tripoli, **Libya**, the ETS-managed call centre continues to serve as a humanitarian hotline and the dedicated national COVID-19 hotline to support the government's response to the pandemic. To date, the call centre has received more than 14,400 calls. Most COVID-19-related calls were from people asking for information, such as awareness messages, useful contact numbers and locations of emergency centres. Operators provided official guidelines and referred those with potential COVID-19 symptoms to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

The ETC in the **Pacific** continues to formulate a project plan to spend US\$ 600,000 received from USAID/BHA and an additional US\$ 310,000 received from OFDA for the response to COVID-19 in the Pacific, including the design of a common feedback mechanism (CFM) project. The ETC is in discussions with Vanuatu's Ministry of Health on their requirements to implement a new teleconferencing system to facilitate remote working.

Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC)

Food Security Sector (FSS) partners in Cox's Bazar, **Bangladesh**, supported the [production and distribution of 2.8 million reusable face masks](#), helping to safeguard livelihoods, fill global supply gaps and protect refugees and host communities from further risk of COVID-19 contamination.

In **Afghanistan**, FSC activities have largely resumed, with food assistance increasing in scope and livelihood activities restarting ahead of the winter wheat planting cycle. Delays at Karachi port due to administrative impediments continue to cause partial supply pipeline ruptures of key staple goods, including vegetable oil. FSC continues to call upon authorities in both Pakistan and Afghanistan to develop harmonized and fast-track procedures to facilitate the movement of lifesaving goods.

In **Burkina Faso**, during August, FSC assisted 1.2 million people in total out of 3.3 million targeted by the Cadre Harmonisé. In addition, FSC assisted 644,000 IDPs and 60,000 through livelihood protection.

In **Mozambique**, FSC partners reached close to 643,600 food-insecure people in September 2020. A total of 359,300 people was provided with livelihood assistance by FSC partners during the winter agricultural season, lasting from May to September, with an additional 95,300 people planned to be assisted between October and December 2020.

In **Zimbabwe**, during September, FSC partners provided in-kind food assistance, vouchers, or cash to a total of 1,064,000 beneficiaries in both rural and urban zones, with further 224,000 beneficiaries receiving agricultural and livelihood support, making 51 percent of the targeted population.

In response to the floods in **South Sudan**, FSC partners provided food assistance to 1.1 million and livelihood support to 108,000 people.

In **Somalia**, FSC improved access to food and safety nets through assisting 1.5 million people. Responses in Bakool, Lower Shabelle and Middle Juba meet less than 40 percent of the target mainly due to access issues. In Banadir, coverage is less than 10 percent due to funding shortfalls.

Notably, people assisted with unconditional transfers are mostly those in IPC 3 or worse who experience significant consumption gaps. FSC partners assisted 163,900 beneficiaries in September with seasonal inputs and livestock asset protection. Starting from August, a total of 189,916 beneficiaries have been assisted with farm inputs and fishing equipment.

Global Logistics Cluster

In the **Central African Republic**, the facilitation of incoming dedicated air cargo is ongoing on behalf of humanitarian partners. In October, the Logistics Cluster helped receive a WFP-chartered cargo flight from the WFP Global Humanitarian Response Hub in Liège, Belgium, bringing in COVID-19 response items on behalf of various partner agencies.

In **Somalia**, dedicated cargo airlifts are being facilitated on behalf of the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), WHO and key health partners upon request. As of 16 October, 82 MT of COVID-19 related cargo has been transported to Dhusamareb, Kismayo, Baidoa, Jowar, Hargeisa, Beletwyene, Garowe, Guriel and Barawe.

The last Cargo Entry Point Update (CEPU) can be found [here](#) with an [online map version](#) also available.

Regional Updates

Regional Bureau Bangkok

WFP is supporting governments to address the impact of COVID-19 through national social protection systems; basic service delivery; analysis of food systems, food security and nutrition; emergency relief; and humanitarian common services. COVID-19 is compounding the risks already faced in many parts of the region due to escalating conflict and extreme weather events. In the current monsoon season, several countries have already been impacted by floods and landslides. Preparations for heavy rain and the upcoming winter are even more difficult than usual and funding remains stretched for critical operations such as **Myanmar** and **Afghanistan**.

WFP activities in Asia-Pacific have been modified to continue lifesaving relief assistance while avoiding unnecessary exposure to risks of infection. This includes serving over 110,000 people with general food assistance to support government quarantine measures in **Myanmar, Laos** and **Nepal**. Considering the recent spike of COVID-19 cases in central Rakhine in **Myanmar**, WFP extended this assistance to additional quarantine sites in the country in September. WFP has adjusted nutrition-specific and -sensitive interventions across the region to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. In **Bangladesh**, WFP and several other agencies are continuing to engage refugees in Cox's Bazar in mask production, with more than 359,740 masks produced for the refugee population. While thousands of schools across the region are closed, WFP has adjusted its programmes to reach over 1 million children with take-home rations or cash-based transfers in **Cambodia, Laos, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, Myanmar** and **Sri Lanka**. In **Laos**, schools reopened in September and WFP resumed its school meals programme, reaching more than 76,990 children that month.

WFP is also supporting supply chain services in the region, facilitating the movement of COVID-19 essential items and offering common storage space to humanitarian partners. Several regular air routes remain operational in the region (serving **Myanmar, Laos** and **Timor-Leste**) and have so far transported more than 2,700 humanitarian personnel and 29 mt of essential humanitarian cargo. WFP has also operated 11 flights connecting countries and territories of the Pacific Islands.

In the Pacific, WFP is assisting governments and national stakeholders to capture trends and data to improve monitoring and coordination through mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM). Round three of data collection in **Fiji** is now complete while round two in **Tonga** and **Samoa** is nearly finalized.

Significant scale-up is under way for **Afghanistan** and **Bangladesh**. In **Bangladesh**, WFP is increasing its operation to 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. Out of these, WFP has so far reached over 530,000 people affected by COVID-19 in the host community in Cox's Bazaar. Through the Dhaka Urban Response, WFP has also supported 7,500 households affected by COVID-19 through cash transfers in September. In **Afghanistan**, WFP has begun its scale-up to an additional 3 million people impacted by COVID-19 with food and cash transfers, currently having reached over 442,800 people in urban areas. The COVID-response focuses on urban poor households to complement WFP's regular programming which primarily targets households in rural areas.

WFP targeting in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa due to COVID-19 has increased from 9.4 million to 9.8 million. The pandemic has highlighted the **urgency for national governments to expedite progress in building and extending social protection systems to cushion the socio-economic impact of the crisis**. In **Jordan** WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Aid Fund (NAF), allowing the continued provision of technical assistance and support to the NAF expansion programme, complementary support programme and Emergency Cash Assistance programme through 2022. In addition, WFP will transfer US\$ 1.5 million for distribution to people eligible for NAF's COVID-19 emergency cash assistance programme. In **Sudan**, the Ministry of Finance announced the launch of the pilot phase of the Sudan Family Support Programme which will initially target around 500,000 people across 11 states and gradually increase to reach seven million people across all 18 states. WFP is providing technical assistance to set up a system for providing direct cash transfers to 80 percent of the population.

Livelihood and resilience building activities have resumed in most countries in the region with risk mitigation measures in place to sustain the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people against the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. In **Palestine**, as part of resilience strengthening activities, WFP and the NGO ARIJ finalized the selection of 100 families in the West Bank who will receive climate-smart agricultural assets including hydroponics, livestock and home gardens. In **Kyrgyzstan**, WFP completed a pilot programme with participants in 34 villages under the Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE) project. WFP has collected project proposals to train 840 rural women in various areas, including greenhouse farming, dairy processing, poultry farming, handicrafts making, and fish farming, as well as other topics. Furthermore, all participants in the 34 villages will be receiving training on basic business planning and financial literacy throughout October.

Nutrition support is ongoing throughout the region. In **Syria**, treatment and prevention of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) through the distribution of specialized nutritious food to children 06-59 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls continue as planned. In **Sudan**, WFP is expanding the provision of its life-saving nutrition support from 13 to 16 states and planning to extend its reach to 1.4 million children under five and pregnant and lactating women. WFP support to MAM treatment is planned as part of the government nutrition services, with implementation likely to start in October.

Cash-based transfers (CBT) remain a key assistance mechanism in adjusting or expanding WFP's activities in response to COVID-19. In **Lebanon** WFP started cash distributions to explosion-affected economically vulnerable population. Those targeted receive a monthly disbursement of US\$ 250 or LBP equivalent for a period of six months. Through this assistance, WFP aims to help families manage various basic needs including food. WFP continues to expand the outreach and increasing the number of people, with the aim of reaching 10,000 families (approximately 50,000 individuals) through its cooperating partners as well as through its [self-registration site](#). In **Iraq**, WFP continues to roll out through their participating food agent "My Food Ration" mobile app to enable citizens to stay home and update/access their data and pay for services digitally. Next is a large-scale trial planned to be in Najaf governorate.

WFP is closely monitoring the reopening of schools in the region in order to **safely commence school meals activities**. While in some countries, like **Tajikistan**, the school meals programme partially resumed, in others the school opening has been delayed due to an increase in COVID-19 cases. In **Sudan** where the re-opening of schools has been further postponed to 22 November, WFP is planning to implement a second round of take-home rations in 10 states. In **Jordan**, the Government closed many public and private schools in response to COVID-19, turning to online schooling for grades four to eleven, while schooling for the first three grades remained face to face. WFP therefore only initiated its school meals activities in Za'atari camp formal schools targeting around 8,000 students with the provision of date bars.

The West Africa region had 218,959 confirmed COVID-19 cases (cumulative) as of 2 November 2020, of which 93 percent are recovered cases and less than 6 percent are still active cases. A continuous **downward trend** in number of new cases is reported and the number of active cases decreased by 30 percent since the last reporting period (mid-October). Countries in the region have further relaxed COVID-19 related restriction measures (such as in **The Gambia**, where the Government announced the opening of all land and sea borders) and primary schools have further reopened in October for the 2020/2021 academic year in **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea Bissau, Niger, and Sierra Leone**.

Data collection as part of the upcoming regional food security analysis (Cadre Harmonisé) is ongoing. Preliminary results of the integrated food security classification (IPC) analysis (September 2020) in **CAR** estimate that between September 2020 to April 2021, some 1.9 million people are acutely food insecure. Moreover, as a result of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, the number of people in need of assistance in Bangui increased from 25 percent to 50 percent of the population in September 2020 compared to September 2019. In **Burkina Faso**, [prices of basic food items](#) experienced significant increases between July and August 2020, which translates into greater pressure on livelihoods.

The security situation remains extremely volatile in several countries of the region, including the **Central Sahel (Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali), Central African Republic (CAR), Cameroon and Nigeria**, with incidents of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) targeting civilians, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and humanitarian workers, which continue to threaten the continuity of WFP's operations. Election-related unrest also continues in **Guinea** and **Côte d'Ivoire**, where presidential elections took place on 18 October and 31 October respectively.

With the gradual reopening of schools, country offices have started food deliveries to schools or transfer of funds for the provision of school meals, while distribution of take-home rations continued in others (as in **Cameroon, Senegal and The Gambia**). Distribution of COVID-19 protective hygiene kits to schools is also ongoing in several countries, including in **Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Sao Tome and Principe**. In **The Gambia** WFP continues to distribute Take Home Rations to over 150,740 school children in 312 Schools targeting 73,000 households. In **Mali**, the school meals programme has resumed and distribution of COVID-19 prevention kits in schools is ongoing in all 656 schools that are assisted by WFP. In **Guinea**, WFP and UNICEF, in consultation with the Ministry of Education are working on a joint proposal on school meals with a focus on school health and nutrition.

Lean season response and food assistance through different modalities are ongoing in the region, targeting populations affected by COVID-19, recent floods (as in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger**), and conflicts. In **CAR**, the third cycle of cash based transfers (CBT) to COVID-19 patients in **Bangui, Bria, Bambari and Paoua** was completed, while a COVID-19 related CBT programme targeting 1,600 families was newly launched in **Guinea Bissau**, jointly with UNICEF, and in **Nigeria**, the urban response targeting the Federal Capital Territory, Lagos and Kano has commenced in Kano.

Preparations to launch emergency COVID-19 related food and cash assistance are also ongoing in **Cameroon, Sierra Leone and The Gambia**. In the NW/SW regions, WFP is also preparing the scale-up of in-kind food assistance (to 350,000 people per month) and of the Blanket Supplementary Meals Programme (to 26,000 children and 17,500 pregnant and lactating women). In **Sierra Leone**, a three-months emergency food assistance through CBTs will be provided to over 51,000 people (10,259 households), while in **The Gambia**, WFP in partnership with the Government plans to provide CBTs to over 5,350 households (42,840 individuals) in rural and urban areas.

Southern Africa is entering a precarious lean season against the backdrop of a COVID-19 crisis, in combination with pockets of armed conflict and violence, and co-varying climate shocks, including cyclones, droughts and floods. A locust plague is also threatening winter crops and the main planting season in **Angola, Namibia, Zambia** and **Zimbabwe**, putting the livelihoods of farmers already dealing with food shortages at stake. The devastating socio-economic fallout from the pandemic continues to unfold, especially in many low-income households in urban areas and poor rural communities, even as most countries gradually ease lockdowns and progressively re-open air, maritime and land traffic to push for economic restorations. Hunger and malnutrition levels in the region remain alarming – particularly in drought-affected areas of **Zimbabwe, Mozambique** and **Madagascar**, and conflict zones in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Mozambique** – where some 42 million people are projected to be needing food assistance in the next 12 months in WFP’s 12 countries of operation.

In response to the deepening vulnerabilities across the region, WFP continues to escalate its life-saving food assistance through a hybrid modality of in-kind and cash-based transfers to the most affected populations. In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the country with the most acutely food insecure people in the world, WFP is increasing the number of people it assists this year by 1.4 million to address soaring food needs linked to COVID-19 to more than 9 million people. In **Zimbabwe**, WFP is scaling up its lean season assistance programme from more than 751,000 people to almost 1.1 million people. In **Mozambique**, in support of the Government, WFP and UNICEF have begun the implementation of a social protection programme, supporting more than 85,000 urban and peri-urban families for six months.

Moreover, WFP continues to sustain assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). In **Angola**, in October, WFP assisted more than 6,500 refugees through general food distribution, coupled with social and behaviour change communication on COVID-19 prevention and nutrition. In **Malawi**, WFP provided cash-based transfers for 41,000 food-insecure refugees last month, who have been particularly hit by the economic consequences of COVID-19. In **Mozambique**, WFP currently provides food assistance in Cabo Delgado to nearly 200,000 IDPs. Despite access constraints, WFP plans to scale up assistance to 400,000 IDPs over the next few months. Adding to an already complex situation, Cabo Delgado has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, with the increasing number of IDPs affected to a larger extent than the general population.

Safety measures have been put in place to support efforts to minimize the risks of COVID-19 through distributions of double/triple rations such as in **Zambia** and **Zimbabwe** to lessen mass gathering while ensuring continued critical assistance to the most vulnerable. With the closure of schools, school-age children in **Malawi** and **Mozambique** are receiving take-home rations, providing an interim respite for families until children return to school. WFP is supporting national and local governments in designing strategies for the safe reopening of schools. In the **Republic of Congo**, students started receiving daily school meals through WFP’s school meals programme following the re-opening of schools in October.

WFP remains focused on **integrating social protection with resilience and emergency preparedness and response to strengthen national systems** and enhance capacity to withstand future shocks across Southern Africa. With the start of the lean season (October to March for most countries in the region), WFP is supporting partners in focusing assistance towards rural food-insecure populations, while maintaining support to other vulnerable groups. In the coming months, WFP will be supporting country-level diagnostics to assess the capacity and gaps to further strengthen the role of social protection systems in addressing seasonal needs. Moreover, being home to one-third of all people living with HIV worldwide, WFP is also taking an HIV-sensitive approach to social protection, ensuring that social protection systems are inclusive of people living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV at policy, programme, and intervention levels.

Regional Bureau Nairobi

In East Africa, the food security situation remains alarming with the compounding impact of conflict, floods, locust outbreak and socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Further, a new generation of breeding swarms in **Ethiopia** and **Somalia** has heightened concerns of widespread infestation in East Africa and threaten food production and livelihoods.

In the region, WFP continues to support social protection programmes and urban safety nets to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable communities. In **Kenya**, WFP reached 56,000 households (205,000 people) in the Nairobi informal settlements impacted by the economic effects of the pandemic through Cash Based Transfers (CBT). Further, WFP has also expanded the COVID-19 urban response to Mombasa County. WFP plans to reach up to 90,000 people with food assistance through cash transfers for three months.

In **Somalia**, WFP is providing quarterly cash-based transfers through a national rural safety net targeting 1.2 million people. In September, WFP provided food assistance to approximately 1.8 million food insecure people across the country enabling them to meet their food and nutrition needs. In **Burundi**, WFP is preparing to shift from in-kind food provision to cash-based transfers (CBT) for assistance to returnees, starting as of November. This change is necessitated by protection concerns related to in-kind food provisions, such as the transportation of heavy bags of food on long distances and the obligation to share the ration with host communities once the returnees arrive in their zones of origin which are also food insecure. Meanwhile, in **South Sudan**, the upsurge in food prices had a two-fold impact: increased requirements for CBT programmes and, increased humanitarian needs across the board. WFP South Sudan is adjusting the monthly transfer values of CBT programmes to respond to market fluctuations. Preparations for a scale-up for the final distribution rounds are underway, with a higher number of beneficiaries to be reached in Juba (approximately 114,600 beneficiaries) and Bor town (about 40,000 beneficiaries).

Gradual re-opening of schools is underway in **Kenya**, **South Sudan** and **Uganda**. In **Kenya**, schools have reopened in the camps as per the government guidance that was issued last week. Consequently, WFP has resumed the **School Meals Programme (SMP)** in the refugee settlements to support leaners in the vocational centers, class 8 and grade 4 who are currently in session. In **Rwanda**, schools are still closed awaiting cabinet resolution on modalities of reopening. A phased approach has been proposed for the reopening starting with universities, secondary schools followed by upper primary and lower primary school as the last cohort. Government is working with several partners to put measures in place for reopening. Discussions are underway for a second round take home rations distributions depending on the dates of school reopening. In preparation for the reopening of schools in **South Sudan**, WFP conducted a rapid assessment to gauge readiness for resumption of school feeding activities. Initial reports indicated that there were challenges with the school infrastructure. WFP is collaborating with UNICEF in preparing schools for safe reopening. UNICEF supporting the schools with water storage facilities, soap, thermometers and face masks to enhance capacity for prevention of COVID-19 infections. In **Djibouti**, school meal activities have resumed in the schools. Discussions are ongoing regarding the full transition of WFP – supported activities to the Government.

Regional Bureau Panama

As the region contends with over 2.5 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, security constraints, ongoing political developments and climate shocks continue to trigger socio-economic instabilities and population displacement, impacting the delivery of WFP assistance.

Recent political developments risks are putting further strain on insecurity across the region. Social mobilizations were reported throughout **Bolivia** in recent weeks, in particular on 21 October, following the victory of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) in the presidential [elections](#). In the event that the country returns to a state of widespread civil unrest, roadblocks could pose operational challenges to WFP. In **Colombia**, an indigenous activists' caravan from Cali has reached Bogota to demand various government concessions, joining the protests during days of national strike caused by widespread socio-political discontent in the country. An intensification of civil unrest could impact WFP operations. In **Haiti**, the security situation remains volatile with continuing demonstrations in Port-au-Prince risking the trigger of a new wave of protests and associated violence. In **Nicaragua**, the international community expressed concerns over President Ortega's reported effort to tighten control as the country prepares for national elections in 2021.

Regional Bureau Panama

The Government recently passed the “foreign agents’ law,” which requires that those receiving money from foreign governments and institutions register with the interior ministry and refrain from financing or supporting any internal political activity. In the framework of the COVID-19 response, WFP continues to complement national efforts by providing food assistance to the most vulnerable populations affected by COVID-19, as well as capacity strengthening services to Governments. In **El Salvador**, the national response was supported by complementing deliveries by the Government, benefiting some 42,700 people. WFP has also rapidly adapted and significantly scaled-up its response for the most vulnerable groups in **Colombia**, including Venezuelan migrant families, victims of internal violence, living in vulnerability conditions in the cities of La Paz and El Alto. WFP **Guatemala** is aiming to scale up assistance to approximately 700,000 people and is providing technical capacity strengthening through the application of the SCOPE digital platform, which will allow the Government to generate a reliable and transparent database beneficiary registration system. In the country, WFP is also supporting the Ministry of Health through the screening of acute malnutrition among children for nutritional surveillance.

WFP operations continue to provide vital assistance through cash-based transfers, school feeding, and resilience activities, now gradually resuming across the region. As part of its school feeding activities, WFP **Colombia** is currently supporting some 450,000 beneficiaries every month with food parcels, cash-based transfers, and hot meals. In **Honduras**, where the red alert for COVID-19 has been extended for two more weeks, WFP continues the second cycle of emergency assistance to 12,477 vulnerable households (62,385 beneficiaries) of 5 provinces in the form of commodity vouchers based on an in-kind food basket. With a strong focus on smallholder women and indigenous communities, the resilience programme has so far assisted 15,400 beneficiaries, in 16 municipalities. WFP **Bolivia** has supported more than 11,000 vulnerable people mainly in peri-urban areas through the distribution of electronic vouchers for food and essential goods in selected supermarkets that was put in place earlier during the response. WFP **Guatemala** is also providing food procurement services on behalf of the Government under the ‘Food Support Programme’, aimed at distributing food commodities to food-insecure households across the country.

As part of the UN socio-economic response plan to COVID-19, WFP **Cuba** is supporting the local food systems and conducting social protection programmes and school feeding, nutrition and logistics activities jointly with FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNICEF and other partners. **Haiti**’s local currency is appreciating, which is weakening the purchasing power that households receive through WFP cash transfers. At least 4 million people are estimated to be in need of urgent food assistance in Haiti, out of which 900,000 are facing severe hunger (IPC phase 4). IPC projections estimate that the number of people facing high acute food insecurity could rise up to 4.4 million between March and June 2021 while the number of people in a critical situation among them (IPC phase 4) could increase to 1.16m in the same timeframe. Due to COVID-19, WFP is scaling up its emergency response and planning to reach 850,000 of the most vulnerable and food-insecure Haitians over the next 11 months, this includes people affected by COVID-19. As part of the response, the Country Office is concluding the first cycle of voucher distributions in Cite Soleil, the first WFP intervention in the most food-insecure neighborhood of Port-au-Prince in years.