



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Mauritania Country Brief July 2018

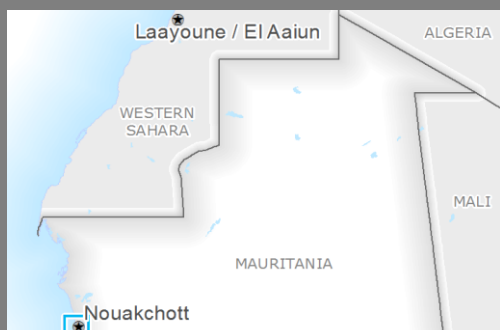


Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel, with a population of 4.4 million (UNFPA, 2017) living over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km² territory. Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity and resilience of populations.

Over the past five years, food insecurity rates ranged from 25 to 30 percent during the lean season. Global acute malnutrition rates are also high in children aged 6-59 months and above the WHO emergency threshold of 15 percent (SMART) in 23 departments, especially during the lean season. Mauritania continues to host the second largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with 56,000 refugees registered in Mbera camp. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.

In Mauritania, poor rainfall in the 2017 season has sparked acute pasture and water shortages, raised food costs and caused livestock prices to plummet, adding further stress to already impoverished households and food insecure vulnerable people. This year's especially acute lean season is approaching its peak – meaning food scarcity, increasing severe acute malnutrition and outbreaks of epidemics.



Population: **4.4 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **157 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

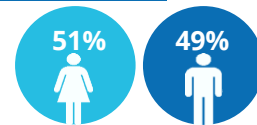
In Numbers

884 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 1,580,450 cash-based transfers made

US\$ 9 m six months (August 2018-January 2019) net funding requirements, representing 13% of total requirement (US\$ 61 M)

236,700 people assisted in JULY 2018



Strategic Updates

- As co-lead to the Food Security sector, WFP has spearheaded discussions with the Nutrition sector in mid-July to cover high acute malnutrition burden departments. These departments have been identified by a nation-wide malnutrition screening, coupled with results from the new SMART survey (July 2018), highlighting additional departments having severe acute malnutrition rates as high as 6 percent. As a result, WFP decided to expand its geographical positioning in these departments for a total coverage of 25 departments in August. 21 departments will be assisted with integrated package of food/cash distributions and nutrition support for the prevention and treatment of global acute malnutrition; while four high acute malnutrition burden departments will be assisted with curative and preventive support for global acute malnutrition (GAM) alone because lack of funding.
- The scale-up plan is made possible thanks to reallocation of balances and expected new funding contributions, which will enable WFP to reach 285,000 people (from 193,000 in July) between August and September in 25 departments.
- In July, the Ministry of Finance held a meeting to discuss the drought response with technical and financial partners, highlighting the importance of a coordinated intervention between the Government and partners.

Operational Updates

Support to drought affected people

- In July, WFP reached 176,200 beneficiaries (91 percent out of 193,000 prioritized beneficiaries for the month) through GFD in-kind and cash-based transfers. WFP provided a full household monthly in-kind ration and cash-based transfer. Both the in-kind ration and the cash transfer cover for 70 percent of the daily kcal intake of a six-member average household.
- As part of the nutrition support for the prevention, respectively 7,160 children and 2,530 pregnant and lactating women received preventive nutrition assistance. Some 3,970 children aged 6-59 months and 340 mothers were supported with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment.

Support to Malian refugees

- In July, WFP continued to assist 56,000 refugees with a reduced mixed cash/food ration. The ration is tailored to the household's size.

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Main photo: Credit: WFP/Vanessa Rizzi
Caption: Children playing in a village near Kaedi (southwestern Gorgol region).

- Considering the pipeline situation, WFP decided to increase the weight of in-kind component of the ration to compensate for the underfunded cash component between July and September. WFP continues to monitor implications on the food and nutrition security of refugee households and abilities to satisfy their basic needs.
- In July, WFP introduced electronic bank cards in partnership with UNHCR for Malian refugees in Mbera camp to improve and make safer the collecting of their cash entitlements.

Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018)

| Total Requirement (in USD) | Allocated Contributions (in USD) | Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 61 m | 31 m | 9 m |

UNHAS (United Nations Humanitarian Air Service)

- In July, UNHAS provided service to humanitarian organisation by transporting a total of 271 passengers connecting Nouakchott-Bassikounou-Nema. UNHAS also transported 860 kg of light cargo through 14 in-country rotations.
- UNHAS still has not received authorization from the Mauritanian Government to resume flight operations in other locations (Kiffa, Kaedi, Alioun and Selibaby). Lack of authorization affects the humanitarian operations, hampering the support that many vulnerable families and communities require.
- USD 800,880 is needed for UNHAS operations in Mauritania for the next six months.

Monitoring

- The scattered rainfall trends of this year's rainy season, combined with an already unfavourable rainy season in 2017, led to a cumulative impact on the food security of populations, who have tapped into their coping mechanisms already in the past two years, in particular for those living in the central and southern regions of Mauritania.
- The most vulnerable households do not have stock of seeds and would have to get further indebted to buy seeds. Communities are relying on markets for food and with unfavourable prices, poor families often resort to wild foods for survival. Families are forced to adopt negative coping mechanisms, such as selling reproductive cattle, begging, forced migration, and over-use of natural resources further degrading a very fragile environment.
- Price monitoring continued showing an increase for both animal feed and main local (up to 50 percent) and international food commodity prices (around 10 percent), due to a reduction of food supply in main markets.

Challenges

- WFP urgently needs a of USD 9 million for overall operations in Mauritania. The lean season response operations to drought-affected Mauritians is facing a funding deficit of USD 3.2 million until end September. For the next six months, WFP critically needs USD5 million to provide food assistance to refugees, and USD 800,000 for UNHAS operations in Mauritania.
- WFP continues to experience various types of delays and constraints limiting its ability to respond at scale (i.e. 10-day dockers strike blocking offloading containers, heavy rains making many areas inaccessible in South and East areas, weak technical and operational capacities of implementing partners). Nevertheless, WFP's continues to have a dynamic analysis and response plan, taking actions to improve the delivery of assistance and scaling up its areas of intervention, in order to reach the maximum number of vulnerable people.

Donors

In alphabetical order

Australia, Canada, European Union, France, Germany, Japan, Monaco, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Food insecure (and vulnerable) Mauritanian populations, including school-age children have stable access to adequate food all year-round

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- School meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Support to drought-affected people: Unconditional food/cash assistance to vulnerable Mauritanian households, including preventive nutrition rations and MAM treatment.
- Support to Malian refugees: Food/cash assistance to food insecure Malian refugees affected by Mali's crisis, including preventive nutrition rations and MAM treatment, and emergency school meals

Strategic Result 3: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Children and pregnant and lactating women and girls have improved nutritional status all year-round

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- MAM treatment integrated into the drought response interventions

Strategic Result 4: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure smallholders and communities have enhanced livelihoods and resilience to better support food security and nutrition needs all year-round

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide conditional food assistance to food insecure Mauritanian households for community and household assets creation

Strategic Result 5: Global partnership support

Strategic Outcome 5: The Humanitarian community in Mauritania has access to UNHAS services all year-round

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners, towards humanitarian interventions

Strategic Result 6: Country strategic capacities

Strategic Outcome 6: Government has enhanced capacities to manage food security and nutrition policies and programmes, and identify, target and assist food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations all year-round

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide training and technical support to government institutions.