



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Mauritania Country Brief November 2018

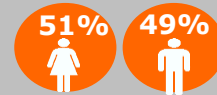
In Numbers

728 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 0.67 m cash-based transfers made

US\$ 10.5 m six months (December 2018-May 2019) net funding requirements, representing 17% of total

145,000 people assisted
in NOVEMBER 2018



WFP
SAYS
NO to
GENDER
BASED
VIOLENCE

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.

Poor rainfall during the 2017 season sparked acute pasture and water shortages, raised food prices 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 resulted in a further impoverishment of people's livelihoods and depletion of productive assets.

Over the past five years, food insecurity rates have ranged from 25 to 30 percent during the lean season. Global acute malnutrition rates continue to be high in children aged 6-59 months and above the WHO emergency threshold of 15 percent (SMART) in 25 departments during this year's lean season and following the 2017 drought. Mauritania hosts the second largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with 57,000 refugees registered in Mbera camp. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: 4.4 million

2017 Human Development Index: 159 out of 189

Income Level: Lower middle

Chronic malnutrition: 23% of children between 6-59 months

Strategic Updates

- During the second regular session of WFP's **Executive Board** in November, the **new Country Strategic Plan (CSP)** of Mauritania was officially approved for the next four years (2019-2022), for a total budget of USD 132 million. The strategy will combine direct interventions serving protective and productive safety-net functions – including multi-year community-based resilience packages with increasing capacity strengthening efforts aimed at equipping the country with the right set of Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) tools, processes and institutional framework to address both the underlying causes of structural poverty and transient food insecurity. This approach will, over the long run, allow for a progressive transition of programmatic responsibilities to the Government.
- **Lean season interventions** in support of drought-affected people officially ended on 29 November. WFP supported communities where levels of malnutrition and food insecurity were still particularly high (according to the August 2018 SMART survey). Throughout all the response, WFP was able to provide life-saving assistance to **331,500 people** (78 percent) of the initially planned beneficiaries (427,000). This number further represents 61 percent of the total people initially planned by the food security sector response (538,400 people). In December, food security and nutrition partners will hold a lesson learned exercise to discuss relative strengths and weaknesses in terms of early warning system, response's planning and implementation as well as to draw the lessons learned.
- **UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** operations are likely to end in December 2018 if no additional funding is identified before then. WFP/UNHAS is striving to continue fundraising this common and efficient service. The shutdown of UNHAS operations will hamper the support that vulnerable households and communities require and will constrain the operationalization of humanitarian and development interventions, while raising several concerns since humanitarian access in the country will be less safe and effective.
- As part of the WFP Sahel resilience scale up plan, WFP Mauritania continued to scale up its **resilience interventions** in priority communities, promoting and implementing a longer-term approach, which combines various protective and productive interventions (e.g. food assistance for assets, school feeding, nutritional support and lean season response to safeguard early resilience gains) in a geographically focused, integrated and multi-year manner. This WFP regional approach is part of the wider framework of United Nations Sahel Initiative (UNISS) and the Sahel Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in Action.
- The country office engaged in the WFP's annual campaign on the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**. WFP staff in Mauritania participated in various activities to raise awareness on the different types of GBV, its causes and consequences. The links to food security and WFP work were emphasized, as well as the role everyone needs to play in working toward a world free of gender-based violence.

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Main photo

Credit: WFP/ Agron Dragai

Caption: A WFP beneficiary at Gorgol-Guidimakha

Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018)

2018 Total Requirement (in USD)	2018 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month (Dec-May) Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
61 m	2.5 m	10.5 m

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

- WFP continues to work jointly with African Risk Capacity (ARC) to provide technical support to the Government in customizing the index which will be used for the 2019 drought insurance policy, as part of the Replica pilot initiative.

- WFP, UNHCR and other actors are working to facilitate a gradual shift away from care of refugees in the M'berra camp to **enhance refugees' self-reliance and the resilience of local populations**. The refugees' profiling on the basis of their food security and livelihoods profile has been finalized. Next step includes the finalization of the targeting methodology (by January 2019), the development of a messaging to sensitize refugees on the new targeting approach and the implementation of the strategy by the first quarter of 2019.

Operational Updates

- In November, WFP reached **45,000 drought-affected people** through food and cash assistance, and preventative and curative nutrition activities as part of the lean season response.
- In Mbera camp, WFP assisted **54,400 refugees** (2,000 less than in October due to the movement of refugees in and out the camp) with individual monthly cash component (USD 12.6) of the mixed food/cash ration, allowing to cover 50 percent of the refugees' kcal needs. In-kind assistance was not provided November because of a fumigation exercise. WFP continued to provide curative support to children and women, and started the implementation of the school meals programme, reaching more than 3,700 children refugees.
- The **school meals programme** resumed in November for the 2018/2019 school year, reaching **56,300 Mauritanian children** (90 percent of the target). WFP organised capacity strengthening activities to train teachers on healthier school meals' preparation and food safety.
- Food assistance for assets activities** took place in 40 villages located in the regions of Hodh-Charghi, Guidimakha and Assaba. In parallel, WFP undertook community based participatory planning in two localities (Moutalag and Zerg), two-day field exercises to develop an action plan to tailor WFP responses to local requirements and priorities. Under the *Projet d'Adaptation à la Résilience et aux Changements Climatiques* (PARSAAC), more than **600 beneficiaries** have been involved in plantation activities as well as in building functional chicken coops in six villages. Gardening activities have been carried out in more than 50 cooperatives.
- As part of the country capacity strengthening activities, WFP is making necessary preparations to undertake a capacity needs mapping exercise jointly with the *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* (CSA) in December. This exercise aims to identify national institutions' strengths and weaknesses of **early warning, preparedness and response planning** and elaborate a multi-year capacity support plan.

- UNHAS transported 300 passengers and over 650 kg cargo, connecting Nouakchott-Bassikounou-Kiffa, through over 33 in-country rotations. UNHAS still didn't receive official authorization to resume flight operations in three locations (Kaedi, Aioun and Selibaby) out of the six planned. The temporary authorization to fly to Kiffa is still valid, to compensate the temporary closure of the Nema airport for maintenance works. Nema airport will be closed until further notice.

Challenges

- USD 10.5 million is needed for WFP operations in Mauritania for the next six months, December 2018 to May 2019.** Refugee operations face a shortfall of USD 5 million. USD 1.2 million is needed for UNHAS to prevent the service from shutting down at the end of December 2018. USD 1.6 million and USD 1.3 million, are needed for school meals and FFA activities respectively. A small portion (USD 1.5 million) of advances requested to set up 2018 lean season response also needs to be reimbursed.

Donors:

Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Monaco, Norway, OPEC, Private Donors, Saudi Arabia, Spain, UN Funds, United Kingdom, USA, and Multilateral