Operational Context

Jordan is an upper-middle-income country, with a population of 10.5 million, of which 2.9 million are non-citizens, including refugees. Jordan is also a resource-poor, food-deficit country with limited agricultural land, no energy resources and scarce water supply. Nationwide, 0.5 percent of Jordanian households are considered food insecure, and an additional 5.7 percent are vulnerable to food insecurity. Over 15.7 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and a third is considered transient poor. Analysis from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) further shows that poverty over the life cycle is concentrated among children in Jordan, particularly among those between the ages of 5 and 12, the proportion reaching 20 percent for this age group. WFP’s 2018 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment shows a worsening food security situation among Syrian refugees in Jordan. According to the Department of Statistics, unemployment stood at 19 percent during the fourth quarter of 2019 - an increase by 0.3 percent compared to the fourth quarter of 2018. The unemployment rate among men stood at 17.7 percent compared to 24.1 percent among women. In addition to that, Jordan burdens the social, economic and environmental impacts of hosting the 650,000 Syrian and 90,000 refugees of other nationalities registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, WFP has been present in Jordan since 1964.

In Numbers

- **870,375** Jordanians and refugees assisted in March 2020
- **480,000** refugees assisted through cash-based transfers
- **390,375** Jordanian and Syrian school children receiving school snacks
- **US$ 101 million** six months net funding requirements (April - September 2020)

Operational Updates

- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Jordan has taken strict measures to contain the spread of the virus, including the closure of the kingdom’s borders, and the suspension of all travels into the country until further notice. All educational institutions and government offices have been closed and private sector activities suspended. With a population of 10.5 million, including over three million non-citizen or refugees, Jordan was put on a full lockdown on 18 March and curfew as of 21 March to date.
- In response to adapted measures by the Government, WFP in Jordan activated its Business Continuity Plan that allows continued support to those in need of food assistance while reducing the risks of exposure while maintaining presence in camps.
- For programme criticality, WFP has taken all necessary measures to continue its General Food Assistance (GFA) to refugees in camps and communities. WFP has also put on hold all GFA supporting activities including data collection, validation, retargeting exercise and e-card distributions.
- In communities, WFP has shifted April’s food assistance two weeks earlier than planned to ensure all refugees have the chance to buy needed food items. In camps, WFP implemented an extended staggered reload schedule as of 22 March to reduce the number of refugees coming to the contracted shops.
- Refugees in camps continued to have access to a diverse collection of fresh and dry food items at contracted shops and bakeries. WFP continued to coordinate with the Syrian Refugees Affairs Department to ensure preventative measures, including social distancing inside the shops and crowd control are in place in line with the Ministry of Health guidelines.

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Photo: Syrian refugees in Zaatari camp line up in front of WFP contracted bakeries, applying social distancing while waiting their turn. ©UNHCR
vouchers were opened up to the purchase of hygiene products.
- WFP continues to run its call center, through 12 call center staff, responding to, on average, 2,000 calls weekly from refugees related to WFP's food assistance. Key messages in camps continues to be shared regularly through WFP channels and those of partner agencies.
- WFP continued the provision of technical assistance to the National Aid Fund (NAF). As a contingency plan, WFP will deliver, through its partner, virtual financial literacy information sessions, and support the enrolment and remote opening of mobile wallets for the newly registered Takaful recipients, thus ensuring that they can receive their first cash assistance from the NAF as early as possible.
- WFP, jointly with the World Bank, is working to provide strategic and operational support to the NAF, in line with the Government's plan to provide emergency cash assistance to 200,000 vulnerable Jordanian families.
- School feeding activities in support of 420,000 Jordanians and Syrian school children was suspended temporarily as of March 14 due to the closure of schools, curfews and restriction of movements.

Monitoring
- Preparation for the remote monitoring exercise started in March. Monitoring tools have been developed and WFP staff and partners were trained on conducting the exercise. The remote monitoring exercise aims at collecting beneficiaries’ feedback on (i) reasons for not redeeming assistance; (ii) feedback on early reload; (iii) experience in redeeming cash assistance during curfew; (iv) effect of COVID-19 on access to food; and (v) confirmation that prevention measurement taken by WFP contracted shops are implemented. Phone surveys were administered to around 500 households across 12 governorates, Azraq and Zaatari camps. Syrians and refugees of other nationalities were surveyed. Findings will be available in April.
- WFP is leading on the inter-agency rapid needs assessment conducted jointly with UNHCR and UNICEF. The assessment will target Syrians and refugees of other nationalities, as well as vulnerable Jordanians. Findings will be available in mid-April and will inform UN operations on the ground as well as provide a platform for joint advocacy and fundraising. The assessment is also expected to provide a better understating of the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of women and children.

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