Tajikistan is a landlocked, low-income and food-deficit country. The mountainous landscape confines arable land to just seven percent of the country's surface and poses enormous food security challenges during the winter period. The country is the poorest in the Commonwealth of Independent States, with 27.4 percent of the population living in poverty and 8.6 percent living in extreme poverty (World Bank and UNDP).

In Tajikistan, despite significant improvements in recent years, malnutrition rates remain high. WFP is contributing to the Government's progress on the sustainable Development Goal -SDG 2, by providing access to appropriate nutritional support and health care, promoting school feeding, building resilience to the impacts of climate change, and ensuring preparedness for recurring natural disasters. The Government has identified food security and access to quality nutrition as one of its development priorities.

WFP has been present in Tajikistan since 1993. WFP currently operates under the Country’s Strategic Plan (CSP) that was launched in July 2019.

Contact info: WFP.Dushanbe@wfp.org
Country Director: Alberto Correia Mendes
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/tajikistan

Operational Updates

- According to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of Tajikistan (MoHSP), no COVID-19 cases were confirmed in Tajikistan. However, the Government is keeping its border with China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan closed. Limited movement for freight transport is allowed through borders with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In March, the country closed its airports for all international flights. The country opened around 30 quarantine centres nationwide for all arrivals/returnees, including non-nationals.

- On 13 March, the WFP Representative and Country Director in Tajikistan, Alberto Correia Mendes met the Minister of Education and Science, Muhammadyusuf Imomzoda, to discuss the current state of cooperation between WFP and the ministry. They mainly focused in their discussion on the implementation of School Feeding Programme (SFP), on joint efforts to mobilise additional resources and on the gradual handover of SFP to the Tajikistan Government. Currently, the WFP’s School Feeding Programme covers around 2,000 schools in the country. The Programme is funded by the Russian Federation.

- To continue prevention activities related to Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM), a Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) Plan is being developed by WFP and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan (MoHSP). Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) is one of the components of the SBCC Plan for the improvement of hand-washing habits among the targeted population. In cooperation with MoHSP, WFP developed awareness-raising materials on hand-washing behaviour which is currently under review at the MoHSP. The material has been disseminated among the population to make sure that people get the messages and improve their hand-washing behaviour.
Focus area: Root causes of food insecurity
Activities:
- Provide nutritionally balanced school meals to targeted schoolchildren

Focus area: Root Causes
Activities:
- Treat moderate acute malnutrition in children aged 6-59 months and implement malnutrition prevention activities using social and behaviour change communication with vulnerable groups while building the Government's capacity to manage nutrition programmes.

Focus area: Resilience Building
Activities:
- Carry out climate adaptation, asset creation, and livelihood activities aimed at fostering resilience to shocks and stressors, and conduct early response activities in the event of a small scale disaster

Focus area: Root Causes
Activities:
- Provide policy advice and technical assistance to public institutions and private sector stakeholders involved in advocating for and implementing food security and nutrition programmes, including emergency preparedness.
- Strengthen the capacity of government institutions and schools to implement social protection programmes

Monitoring
- During March 2020, WFP carried out regular monitoring visits to 164 project sites.
- With the launch of cash assistance modality, WFP closely monitors the cash distribution and beneficiaries’ access to the banking service. During the reporting period, no beneficiary complaints were received for any activity site.

Challenges
- Since 2012, WFP has been forced to reduce the daily food entitlement to children under the School Feeding Programme due to funding constraints. To cope with the situation, the daily ration has been reduced to 61 percent. Further, since the 2018-2019 school year, the number of feeding days has been reduced from 5 to 4 per week, with one day a week to be covered by local contributions like parents, schools, communities and local government. School feeding interruption continues since December 2019, where out of total 422,000 beneficiaries only 87,000 (20 percent) are receiving hot meals.
- WFP has 100 mt of food commodities allocated for emergency response as a preparedness measure, which is sufficient to support 4,200 people over a period of two months. WFP requires more funding to increase its preparedness efforts.

Resourcing
- Overall funding constraints for period of April 2020 – September 2020 makes up USD 4.7 million. Considering food procurement lead time, which is 100 days, WFP operation in Tajikistan requires urgent allocation of resources to start food procurement, otherwise food pipeline will break.

Donors
Russian Federation, USA, UN Peacebuilding Fund Private Donors (Japan Association for WFP, the Earth Group)