WFP Central African Republic
Country Brief
March 2020

Operational Context

The humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) remains one of the deepest, acute, and damaging in the world. It is among the top 5 humanitarian crises in the world considering the proportion of the people in humanitarian need and the total population. The country is grappling with numerous challenges with poverty remaining stubbornly widespread and high. The country ranks 188 out of 189 countries in the 2019 Human Development Index, with 75 percent of its population living under the international poverty line ($1.90 per day). Basic services are non-existent, and, in many areas, people depend entirely on humanitarian aid for basic services and livelihood opportunities. These aggravating factors have multiplied the impact of the crisis which has rendered one in four citizens displaced.

CAR has a population of about 4.8 million people, about half of which needs food assistance. The 2019 National Food Security Assessment (NFSA) shows that 44 percent of the population (2.1 million) are food-insecure, including 6 percent (300,000), who are severely food insecure.

WFP operations are focused on life-saving interventions to improve food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable crisis-affected people. WFP helps communities by distributing food – including specialized nutritious foods, supporting smallholder farmers in restoring and enhancing their productive assets, as well as building resilience to future crises. WFP maintains a crisis response operation while simultaneously supporting recovery programmes in areas of relative security and providing government capacity strengthening. WFP has been present in CAR since 1969.

Population: 4.8 million
Income Level: Low income
2018 Human Development Index: 188 out of 189
Chronic malnutrition: 38% of children between 6-59 months

In Numbers

2,492 mt of food distributed

USD 425,945 cash-based transfers

USD 88.7 million six-month (April – September 2020) net funding requirements

504,153 people assisted in March 2020

Operational Updates

- In March, WFP reached 504,153 people (57 percent of the planned beneficiaries for the month) with food and nutrition assistance through general food distributions, nutrition, and resilience building activities. WFP distributed over 2,492 mt of food and transferred USD 425,945 in cash assistance.

- Due to a deficit in Super Cereals caused by the unexpected long lead time in receiving food items from the Douala Corridor in Cameroon, assistance to patients under antiretroviral therapy (ART), malnourished pregnant and lactating women and activities for the prevention of acute malnutrition were not implemented. WFP is increasing efforts to resume the implementation of this critical activity.

- CAR recorded 12 cases of COVID-19, including three fully recovered individuals and nine currently under medical observation. Although the current number of detected cases remains low, there is a strong likelihood that local transmission of the virus has started. As the country lacks an advanced health care system, the spread of COVID-19 would be devastating to the population. For WFP’s COVID response, USD 78.2 million is needed to support the additional needs of 632,000 vulnerable people for the next six months.

- WFP is adapting its operations, prioritizing unconditional food assistance, and nutrition activities. These activities are the main safety net to providing lifesaving support nation-wide. All current resources available are being transferred to sustain lifesaving activities. WFP is also reviewing its food distribution procedures to ensure operations do not contribute to the spread of COVID-19, thus promoting and ensuring the “do not harm” principle.

- The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), indicates that during the lean season, between May and August 2020, in the absence of food assistance, 2.1 million people, representing 47 percent of the population (4.8 million), will be severely acutely food insecure, including more than 675,000 people in emergency situations.

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WFP Country Strategy

Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP 2018-2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020 Total Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP 2018-2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020 Total Requirement (in USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 Allocated Contributions (in USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Net funding requirements as of 1 April 2020.

### Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

#### Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected households and communities in targeted areas can meet their basic food and nutrition needs both during and in the aftermath of crises.

**Focus area:** Crisis Response

**Activities:**
- Provide general food distributions.
- Distribute emergency school meals to primary school children.

### Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

#### Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant, lactating women, and malnourished ART patients living in target regions, have an improved nutritional status in line with national targets by 2020.

**Focus area:** Resilience Building

**Activities:**
- Implement BSFP for the prevention of MAM among children aged 6 to 59 months.
- Provide a comprehensive package for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition to children with MAM aged 6 to 59 months, PLW, girls and provide food by prescription to ART patients.
- Provide capacity strengthening to health district authorities, health center staff and community health workers (CHW).
- Provide nutritious school meals to school children.

### Strategic Result 3: Smallholders have improved food security and nutrition

#### Strategic Outcome 3: Food-insecure women and men living in targeted areas of CAR have enhanced livelihoods to support the food security and nutrition needs of their households and communities by 2020.

**Focus area:** Resilience Building

**Activities:**
- Provide smallholder farmers with transfers to support asset creation and technical assistance to increase their access to markets, including purchases from WFP supported school meals.

### Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs

#### Strategic Outcome 4: National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities to establish an adequate social protection system and manage food security and nutrition policies and programmes by 2020.

**Focus area:** Root causes

**Activities:**
- Provide capacity strengthening in zero hunger policies, strategic planning and delivery of programmes to public officials.
- Provide capacity strengthening to the government to establish a national social safety net platform.

### Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise and technology, strengthen global partnership support to country efforts to achieve the SDGs

#### Strategic Outcome 5: Humanitarian community (partners and donors) have enhanced capacity to reach and operate in areas of humanitarian crisis all year-round.

**Focus area:** Crisis Response

**Activities:**
- Provide common logistics and ICT services to the humanitarian community and the government.
- Provide UNHAS services to all partners.
- Provide bilateral logistics services to partners for in country supply chain for three health programmes (malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS).

- Prior to the closure of schools in CAR, WFP reached 37,743 children with 114 mt of food under the emergency school feeding programme and 45,729 children with 115 mt of food under the home-grown school feeding programme. As schools are being closed to limit exposure to and transmission of COVID-19, children who benefit from the WFP school feeding programme will miss the nutrition benefits from the hot and nutrition meals served in schools.

- The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) transported 1,903 passengers and 52.29 mt of essential cargo in March. UNHAS is taking significant steps to ensure the safety of its crew and passengers by operating flights at half capacity to ensure distance between passengers, providing protective gears to all passengers and crew, providing hand sanitizers, and checking passenger temperature before departure and upon arrival.

### Monitoring

- According to WFP market assessment, the restrictive measures due to COVID-19 are likely to constrain WFP's overall supply chain; directly affecting the movement of humanitarian workers, the availability of food, fuel, and other essential items in CAR. Food prices are increasing. At the end of March, a bag of 50kg rice went up by 16 percent, 25 litre of vegetable oil by 31 percent, 50kg of sugar by 8 percent and a box of soap by 24 percent. It is anticipated that this trend will continue in the coming weeks exacerbating the vulnerable populations' food security situation. The socio-economic impacts will be felt throughout 2020 and beyond.

- With the approach of the lean season, conflict-affected households remain at heightened risk of food insecurity as depleted stocks at the household level and diminished purchasing power limit access to available supplies in the market.

### Challenges

- WFP CAR continues to face challenges in importing food items through the Douala corridor (Cameroon). As a result, WFP distributions were hampered by limited food stocks, especially Super Cereals. This situation forced WFP to temporarily suspend activities for the prevention of malnutrition.

### Donors

Belgium, European Commission, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Country-Based Pooled Funds, USA