



WFP Republic of Congo Country Brief

May 2020

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

The Republic of Congo (RoC) ranks poorly on the Human Development Index. Its food production is below national requirements, with only 2 percent of arable land currently under cultivation covering 30 percent of the country's food needs. Forty-eight percent of Congolese live on less than USD 1.25 per day.

WFP is assisting 130,000 people affected by catastrophic flooding which took place in late 2019 and early 2020. Assessment results show that between 36 and 79 percent of the population is moderately or severely food insecure. Sustained food assistance until the end of 2020 is needed in order to avoid a full-blown food crisis in affected areas. WFP also provides assistance through food assistance for assets to people in the Pool region, an area of the country that was affected by a conflict in 2016-2018. WFP supports communities in building their resilience through fish ponds and rural roads rehabilitation.

WFP supports refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) in Likouala and from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Plateaux with food and nutrition assistance.

WFP's operations in RoC include assistance vulnerable people in the country, contributing to the global efforts to reach Sustainable Development Goals 1 (End Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality) and 17 (Partnerships).



Population: **4.2 million**

2018 Human Development Index: **137 out of 189 countries**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **21.2% of children aged 6-59 months**

In Numbers

470 mt food assistance distributed

US\$ 611,680 million cash-based transfers made

91,000 million people assisted
in MAY 2020



Operational Updates

- WFP assessed that 300,000 people are now food insecure in urban areas due to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.
- An urban cash-based transfers (CBT) programme was launched in mid-May in the outlying arrondissements of Brazzaville. For the first phase, 34,000 vulnerable people received a monthly USD 17 CBT to meet their food needs.
- To extend assistance to the 300,000 food-insecure people and to fill the financial gap, WFP requires additional support of USD 7 million.
- Monitoring in Brazzaville and field markets reported a continued increase in the price of food items. Imported products, on which RoC relies for 70 percent, have experienced the disruption of supply chains. The price of the basic food basket increased by 15.5 percent over the month.
- The distribution of take-home rations for the school children continued. In May, 20,567 students received the equivalent of three-month rations to take home, enabling them and their family to maintain good nutrition.
- WFP RoC signed an agreement with the Ministry of health to provide logistics services during the COVID-19 response. Medical equipment was dispatched by road in different areas. Through the WFP humanitarian hub of Addis-Ababa, the airfreight of 16 mt of medical equipment from China was facilitated by the Logistics division.
- The lockdown ended on 18 May 2020; however, WFP remains under Business Continuity Plan until 15 June 2020.
- At the end of May 2020, there were 610 COVID-19 cases and 20 deaths reported, mainly in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.
- Operations to assist CAR and DRC refugees, returnees from the Pool and flood-affected populations are continuing and are adapted to the social distancing measures to limit the spread of the virus. This includes installing handwashing stations at distribution sites and staggering distributions to limit the number of people at the sites at any one time.

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Country Strategic Plan (2019–2023)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
97.9 m	54.9 m	33.4 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Food insecure people affected by shocks have access to adequate food all year round.

Focus Area: *Crisis response*

Activities:

- Provide unconditional and/or conditional food and nutrition assistance to people affected by shocks

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Equitable national social protection interventions effectively target vulnerable populations, including school-aged children with sustained access to safe and nutritious food.

Focus Area: *Root causes of hunger and food insecurity*

Activities:

- Provide safe, adequate and nutritious school meals to targeted school children.
- Provide technical support to Government for improved implementation of shock-responsive social protection interventions

Strategic Result 3: Smallholder have improved food security and nutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Targeted smallholder farmers and communities benefit from productive and sustainable livelihoods which support nutrition value chains.

Focus Area: *Resilience building of smallholder agricultural systems*

Activities:

- Provide analytical, technical and equipment support for smallholder farmers aimed at encouraging market-oriented and climate-resilience production and livelihoods

Strategic Result 5: Development countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 4: Humanitarian and development actors and national systems have access to WFP expertise and services

Focus Area: *Crisis response*

Activities:

- Provide on-demand supply chain services for partners

- On 13 May, WFP launched an urban cash-transfer programme, thanks to USD 500,000 from WFP's Immediate Response Account and USD 250,000 from UNDP. For the first phase, 34,000 vulnerable people in outlying arrondissements of Brazzaville received a USD 7 cash transfer per person through mobile money. This allowed them to buy food in an identified shop-keepers network.
- The lockdown increased gender-based violence cases in urban areas. To report and help victims of protection incidents, UNFPA, together with the Ministry of Women Promotion, set up a toll-free hotline. UNFPA staff are present in WFP-identified shops to support GBV victims and to raise awareness on protection and gender issues.
- At the end of May, WFP RoC received USD 1 million from the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee to extend the cash-transfers assistance to 75,000 people.
- Additional support of USD 7 million is needed to fill the gap and to extend the assistance to 225,000 additional food-insecure people in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.

Flooding in the Likouala, Cuvette and Plateaux Departments

- In February 2019, an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) showed that 130,000 people were food insecure, moderate or severe in the flood affected areas.
- Since November 2019, nearly 150,000 people affected by the floods have received a food assistance, in-kind or through cash transfers in the departments of Likouala, Cuvette and Plateaux. The assistance continues by respecting the limited number of beneficiaries during the distributions, social distancing measures, and by raising the population's awareness of hygiene practices.
- In May 2020, 24,518 flood-affected people received in-kind assistance and 7,029 CAR refugees received CBT in Likouala. 2,235 children under five, and pregnant and lactating women received treatment for moderate acute malnutrition.
- WFP continues to provide on-demand logistic services for humanitarian partners.
- For the flood response, WFP received contribution from USAID, China, ECHO, Canada, Germany. Through the WFP's Immediate Response Account (IRA), USD1.3 million has been granted to continue the assistance through cash transfers in the Likouala department.

Donors

Government of Republic of Congo, China, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Japan, United States of America

Monitoring

National Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

- After two months and a half, the lockdown ended on 18 May. Socio-economic impacts of the health crisis deteriorated the food security in urban areas, which rely heavily on markets and do not have coping strategies in place as in rural areas.
- The overall price trend is still above the seasonal and annual average, especially for imported products, which are subject to disruption in the supply chain. The price and composition of the basic household food basket evolved every week. An increase of 15.5 percent of the price was reported over the month of May. At the end of the month, a fragile decrease of F CFA 100 was recorded for the first time since the beginning of the crisis.