



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Dominican Republic Country Brief

April 2020



## Operational context

The Dominican Republic has experienced economic growth and stability during the past decades, and social policies have contributed to reducing hunger and poverty. However, the food security situation has been affected by inequalities in income distribution, poverty and lack of dietary diversity. Persistent micronutrient deficiencies and increasing overweight and obesity remain major concerns. The country suffers from recurrent natural shocks, which affect food systems. The country's food security priorities to tackle these issues are outlined up to 2030 in its National Development Strategy, the National Zero Hunger Road Map and National Plan for Food Sovereignty, Food Security and Nutrition (2019-2022).

The Dominican government declared a state of emergency on 19 March due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Various social distancing measures have been taken to prevent the spread of the virus, which resulted in the suspension of most of the country's commercial activities. These measures have caused the loss of livelihoods, supply chain disruptions affecting food availability and resulting in increased food prices, hampering purchasing power to access food, and seriously affecting the food security of the population.

According to the Central Bank, over 700,000 formal employees lost their jobs. The informal labour sector (52 percent) is very impacted due to unstable income. Tourism, the main GDP share, will be most impacted. According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the most affected business are the small ones, which generate a total of 2.7 million jobs. As COVID-19 spreads, a reduction of remittances from the United States and Spain could reduce the income of poor households and increase poverty. An estimated 8 million people have had their access to food disrupted. According to initial estimates based on secondary data, approximately 3.3 million people will be in moderate food insecurity, and 750,000 people will be in severe food insecurity.

WFP (present in the Dominican Republic since 1969) has a Country Strategic Plan, agreed upon with the Dominican government, that consists of three strategic outcomes and focuses on strengthening capacities to achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable food systems.



Population: **11.08 million** (estimated)

2018 Human Development Index: **0,745 (high)**

Income level: **Upper middle**

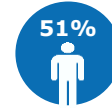
Chronic malnutrition: **7.1% of children under 5.**

## In numbers

**USD 1.3 m** net funding requirements

**82.6 MT** of food assistance distributed

**34,670** people assisted.



## Operational updates

- WFP and *Progresando con Solidaridad* (PROSOLI) program of the Vice-Presidency have adapted their joint interventions for nutrition-sensitive social protection to the COVID-19 response. WFP and PROSOLI have delivered 82.6 metric tons of specialized nutritious food to 34,670 vulnerable people (children aged 6 to 59 months, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly and people living with HIV) through 45 community organizations throughout the country.
- WFP is adjusting its regular operations to support the government response to COVID-19 by providing technical assistance to social protection programmes, carrying out joint food security analysis, expanding its programmes to cover food assistance gaps, and providing on-demand logistics services to humanitarian partners.
- WFP and FAO are leading inter-agency food security sector coordination for a response to COVID-19 and have established coordination mechanisms in this regard with the Secretariat of the National Council for Food Sovereignty, Food Security and Nutrition.
- WFP supported capacity augmentation of the Emergency Operations Centre (COE for its Spanish acronym) with telecommunications equipment for the COVID-19 response, under the award funded by the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA). WFP is also supporting COE in strengthening internal communication protocols.
- The ambassador of the European Union in the DR and WFP Country Director visited *Comedores Económicos* (public canteens) site in Santo Domingo, to monitor the implementation of the food distribution within COVID-19 context, designed within the framework of the project financed by the General Directorate for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). WFP also made an additional delivery of personal protective equipment to *Comedores Económicos*.
- WFP supported the Administrator of Social Subsidies (ADESS for its Spanish acronym) of the Vice-presidency in the distribution of informative materials for the prevention of COVID-19 during the use of the social protection transfers for purchasing food in over two thousand small retail shops (*colmados*).

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## Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019-2023

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
11.6 m	5.1 m	1.3 m

### Strategic Result 1: Strengthen and coordinate public and private institutions.

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Civil society and public and private institutions are strengthened and coordinated and are able to address the zero hunger issues of the most vulnerable populations by 2023.

**Focus area:** *Root causes.*

#### Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to government, civil society, private sector, academic and social entities to generate an inclusive and coordinated national alliance, enhance legal frameworks and develop policies, communication strategies and programmes for improving food security and nutrition.

### Strategic Result 2: Improve the nutritional status of vulnerable populations.

**Strategic Outcome 2:** The most nutritionally vulnerable groups have improved their nutrition status by 2023.

**Focus area:** *Root causes.*

#### Activities:

- Support public health and social protection programmes in implementing comprehensive strategies and systems that follow a rights-based approach to improving the nutrition status of populations who are vulnerable to malnutrition at different stages in the life cycle.

### Strategic Result 3: Improve resilience to crises, better adapt to climate change and reduce disaster risk.

**Strategic Outcome 3:** National and local systems are strengthened and coordinated, improving resilience to shocks, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction among vulnerable populations by 2023.

**Focus area:** *Resilience-building.*

#### Activities:

- Provide technical assistance, promote evidence generation and support advocacy strategies for disaster risk management, emergency preparedness and response and climate change adaptation among institutions and vulnerable communities.

- WFP, Unicef and UNDP are supporting the social protection system in adapting the *Ficha Básica de Emergencias* (FIBE) to the COVID-19 context, as a quick targeting tool.
- In order to generate evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on food security, WFP, FAO, Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank are conducting a study on food systems.

## Monitoring

Monitoring tools have been adapted, and cooperating partners trained to implement the reoriented intervention strategy for the nutrition assistance.

## Challenges

- The increased nutritional needs and the lack of funding, challenge WFP's capacity to respond to vulnerable groups, including undocumented people not reached by social assistance programs.
- There is a risk that food markets will suffer from shortages due to supply chain disruptions.
- Procedures and measures relevant to the proper execution of the humanitarian aid supply chain can slow down WFP's operation and the effectiveness of the response.

## Special Initiatives

WFP, FAO, IFAD, and the organization Global Shapers launched the **Hackathon Shaping Agro** initiative on 30 April. The activity will take place from 16 May to 23 and seeks to bring together students and professionals from the areas of business, social work, agribusiness, and design, among others, to find sustainable technological solutions that contribute to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture and food security in the country.

Further information is available at:

<https://www.shapingagro.com/>.

## Partners

The Vice-President and WFP Country Director have signed the yearly addendum to the MoU that allows WFP to receive the regular funds of the nutrition-sensitive social protection programme.

Other donors to WFP DR in 2020 include the Chinese International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), the General Directorate of European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Germany (FbF Global Initiative) and USA (USAID/OFDA).

Additional partners are UNAIDS UBRAF, FAO ECHO-funded consortium project and more than 45 civil society organizations.