



# STRATEGIC RESPONSE IN THE FACE OF COVID-19 CRISIS

## CONTEXT

As of 22 April 2020, in Mali, almost 300 cases of COVID-19 contamination have been confirmed, including 13 deaths, in five (5) regions of the country. All seven countries bordering Mali are also affected by COVID. Despite preventive measures taken by the Government of Mali to limit the spread of the virus, the risk that the number of cases of coronavirus infections will increase significantly in the coming weeks is significant.

In addition to the health, humanitarian and political challenges posed by COVID 19, it is anticipated that the pandemic will have medium- and long-term socio-economic consequences, including on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The most vulnerable populations, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), women, the elderly, young people and children, are likely to be more severely affected by the effects of COVID-19.

## WFP MALI'S RESPONSE

In accordance with WFP's Global COVID-19 Response Plan and the Government of Mali's national plan to respond to the socio-economic consequences of this crisis, WFP Mali has outlined a response to support ensure continued provision of food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance. It is articulated around three main axes in a vision of nexus approach as taken up:

- 1 Ensure the continuity of WFP's operations;
- 2 Support the humanitarian and health responses at the national level;
- 3 Strengthen national capacity to monitor and analyze vulnerability and risk.

## ENSURING THE CONTINUITY OF WFP'S MALI OPERATIONS

WFP Mali will maintain the current programme of work, minimizing disruptions to planned activities for at least the next three months while adapting programmes to prioritize the health of WFP Staff, Partners and the communities in which we work.

Throughout 2020, WFP had planned to support 2.4 million people with food and nutrition assistance, including:

- ▶ More than 1 million people affected by the conflict;
- ▶ Nearly 500,000 people affected by the Lean Season;
- ▶ More than 400,000 people requiring nutritional assistance;
- ▶ More than 200,000 with livelihoods assistance;
- ▶ Almost 250,000 children to benefit from school feeding activities.

For World Food Programme Mali, the criticality of the programmes will guide the prioritization and possible temporary suspension of certain interventions in relation to risk analysis and in accordance with Government restrictions.

Priority will be given to ensuring the continuity of Life Saving programmes - WFP's emergency food and nutrition responses will be maintained at maximum capacity, including in the event of a deterioration of the food security situation due to the risk posed by COVID. WFP Mali has adapted all distributions and operations to ensure strict alignment with Government measures and to prioritise the health and safety of staff, partners and beneficiaries. Immediate measures to mitigate impact of Covid-19 and maintain current WFP operations include combining/ frontloading distributions, increasing distribution points, equipping partners with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and digital thermometers, and reinforcing Emergency and Logistics with additional staffing capacity.



Distribution site with handwash station in Mopti

Beyond the emergency response, WFP intends to support resilience building and livelihood interventions at the individual, community and systems levels. The continuity of these activities, including asset creation and access to

## SUPPORT THE HUMANITARIAN AND HEALTH RESPONSES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

In addition to WFP's planned support, WFP will support the Government of Mali in providing vulnerable populations quarantined in hospitals or at home due to COVID-19 over the next six months with critical food and nutrition support. The Government has projected 252,000 people will be affected by COVID-19 related restrictions over the next six-months. Accordingly, WFP Mali has outlined a response plan to provide emergency food assistance in the form of 14-day cash transfers to 50,000 COVID-affected persons. Depending on the evolution of the health crisis in Mali, WFP has envisaged a further scale-up to ensure 200,000 COVID-affected persons receive assistance. At present, WFP intends to support the government in their regional responses outside of Bamako where expertise and field-presence is most advantageous.

markets, will be essential following the acute crisis period to address the socio-economic impact in the medium and long term. During this period of containment and restriction on the movement of people and property, WFP is considering the provision of a non-conditional social safety net (cash) to all participants to help them overcome the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. The duration of assistance will be determined by the needs analysis and assets to be prioritised will be classified according to their relevance in order to preserve community level gains.

In addition, WFP will ensure the direct implementation of social safety nets to help the most vulnerable manage the shocks inherent in the socio-economic and health consequences of COVID-19. This will include supporting Early Warning and integrated food security analysis to guide social protection actions, enhancing coordination between ongoing and COVID-specific social protection schemes, and supporting the geographic targeting of those in need of assistance (emergency and social safety nets).

The COVID pandemic will require adjustment to nutritional interventions supported by WFP. In order to facilitate the recovery of communities affected by the virus, WFP will ensure that communities' resilience is strengthened through the promotion of nutrition-sensitive interventions addressing the underlying causes of malnutrition. WFP will support the development of nutrition-sensitive value chains across the set of productive assets that have been implemented under the asset transfer program. To avert disruptions in the nutritional supplement supply chain, WFP will also focus on local production of fortified foods to enable continuity of management programmes but also to significantly improve the availability of high-nutrient foods.



An IDP receive a food voucher in Mopti



Taking into account its expertise and experience in logistics, WFP provides supply chain support for the COVID response in support of the Government and the humanitarian community, under the general coordination of the Ministry of Health and in line with World Health Organization (WHO). WFP is providing support through three main activities:

- ▶ **Delivery of Services on Demand** – this includes Warehouse management, and the transportation of humanitarian cargo and passengers (including air transport (UNHAS));
- ▶ **Sector-Wide Logistics Coordination** – WFP is leading the coordination of the transport and storage sub-groups, and supporting the coordination for the United Nations for purchasing/freighters;
- ▶ **Strengthening the Capacity for Delivery of National Systems** – supporting supply chain planning including conducting needs and gaps analysis, ensuring property inventory systems, warehouse management and cargo tracking systems.



Delivery of cargo through UNHAS in Mopti airport

In the context of COVID19, safe and reliable transportation is critical to ensure the continuity of the humanitarian and health responses. As the situation evolves, the need for air transport could increase significantly. To meet this need, WFP is ensuring operational preparedness to address additional needs that may arise through an extension of its service delivery for air operations through UNHAS.

## **STRENGTHEN NATIONAL CAPACITY TO MONITOR AND ANALYZE VULNERABILITY AND RISK**

Vulnerability monitoring and early warning analyses will be essential to ensuring an adequate and adaptive response. In this context, WFP supports the analysis and monitoring of vulnerability and early warning mechanisms.

- ▶ **Co-lead of the Food Security Cluster** – collects and analyses food security data, issues alerts in terms of deterioration of the food security context, coordinates responses and advocacy. In the context of COVID, the FSC will coordinate adaptation of responses across partners;
- ▶ **Vulnerability monitoring and support for early warning mechanisms** – utilising IT solutions to follow-up on food security data collection in real-time (mVAM); collect information on the health situation through health and nutrition intervention monitoring systems.;
- ▶ **Market Analysis/ Monitoring** - collection and analysis of market functioning data (mVAM), monitoring cross-border flows of food/ commodities.

Where possible, WFP will continue to collect data via mVAM using remote surveys and remote sensing analysis.

## RESOURCING REQUIREMENTS TO RESPOND TO INCREASING NEEDS

WFP Mali's priority is to ensure it has the resources in place to address the food and nutrition needs of the 2.4 million people it plans to assist in Mali in 2020 while supporting the health response with vital logistics common services. In addition to offering a lifeline to these vulnerable people, our programmes provide stability and strengthen the resilience of the communities in which they live.

A lack of resources threatens to jeopardize the availability of critical food and nutrition assistance for populations most in need of support. WFP Mali requires an additional US\$ 42 million to provide food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance to food insecure populations through to September 2020. Of this, WFP Mali urgently requires US\$ 25 million to provide emergency food and nutrition assistance to acutely food insecure populations throughout the Lean Season, the peak of food insecurity in Mali, and to already foreseen COVID-19 caseloads. In addition, US\$ 15 million is required to ensure resilience building and livelihoods activities are in place, critical for rapid recovery from the acute impacts of the health crises.

As the scale of the impact of the pandemic in Mali becomes determinable, WFP's response plan and requirements may need to be further revised upwards to account for additional caseloads and rising food and nutritional needs.



## WFP MALI'S COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN BUDGET BREAKDOWN AND FUNDING GAP (APRIL - SEPTEMBER)

| FOCUS AREA          | WFP ACTIVITY                            | TOTAL REQUIREMENTS BUDGET FOR | TOTAL FUNDING GAP (APRIL-SEPT) |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| CRISIS RESPONSE     | Emergency Food & Nutrition Responses    | 60.9                          | 25.7                           |
|                     | School Feeding                          | 5.0                           | -                              |
| RESILIENCE BUILDING | Nutrition (Malnutrition Prevention)     | 3.7                           | 2.9                            |
|                     | FFA <sup>1</sup><br>SAMS <sup>2</sup>   | 13.0                          | 11.2                           |
|                     | Institutional Capacity                  | 0.9                           | 0.8                            |
| COMMON SERVICES     | United Nations Humanitarian Air Service | 3.7                           | -                              |
|                     | On-demand services                      | 0.9                           | 0.9                            |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>  |   | <b>US\$ 88.3 million</b>      | <b>US\$ 41.6 million</b>       |

<sup>1</sup> Food For Assets

<sup>2</sup> Smallholder Agricultural Market Support

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