

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES



Responding to the development emergency caused by COVID-19

WFP's medium-term
programme framework



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Executive summary

Addressing the “development emergency” low and middle-income countries are facing due to the scale and scope of the global COVID-19 pandemic requires a comprehensive and integrated response which upholds humanitarian and human rights standards. The World Food Programme (WFP) is uniquely positioned to support governments, local organizations and other partners to quickly adapt, design and deliver their own interventions. Thanks to its presence and capacity in over 80 countries, WFP can also rapidly scale-up and directly deliver complementary programmes where required.

A crisis that will affect new populations

The impact of COVID-19 will disproportionately affect low and middle-income countries and could lead to a food security and nutrition crisis of historic proportions. More than 800 million people around the world were food insecure before this crisis. An additional 200 million are expected to lose access to basic food and nutrition in the months ahead.¹

Health care systems in these countries are likely to be overwhelmed, while the combination of a sharp global recession and dependence on volatile import, export and credit markets threatens trade, generates unemployment and loss of income, and constrains the ability of countries to respond to rapidly increasing needs. Food insecurity and malnutrition are projected to deepen among poor and marginalized populations – with estimates indicating the number of people suffering from acute hunger could double – and expand among groups that were previously able to meet their own needs. People at particular risk include those living in densely populated urban areas and camps, those who rely on markets for access to food, people employed in the informal sector, and school-aged children and their families. Structural and socio-economic inequalities based on gender, age, disability, income and other factors will be exacerbated, and compound the risk of hunger.

In the face of these challenges, WFP will support governments through three programme pillars that are central to effective, efficient, and equitable responses

and where WFP has demonstrated value as a partner to governments, UN Agencies and International Financial Institutions. These are:

1. NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

As the pandemic threatens to deepen existing vulnerabilities and create new ones, WFP will help governments to design, adapt and implement social assistance interventions that respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and to strengthen existing shock-responsive social protection systems. Drawing on decades of experience in safety-net programming in crisis contexts, and on extensive technical expertise in analysis, assessment, programme design, in-kind and cash delivery systems and accountability to affected populations, WFP can help governments to:

- increase understanding of needs and changing vulnerabilities arising from the crisis;
- adapt existing safety nets to increase the value or coverage of in-kind or cash-based social assistance;
- establish new schemes to reach populations that are not covered by current safety nets;
- maintain programmes that protect populations from other shocks, like extreme climate events, that will compound COVID.

2. BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY

WFP can support governments in continuing to ensure essential nutrition and school-based services to protect children and women, build human capital and enable recovery.

School-based programmes – Due to COVID-related school closures, 370 million school children are currently missing out on school meals. In countries across the globe, school feeding programmes provide a crucial and widespread safety net that supports children and their families. Recognizing their importance, many countries are adapting programmes to continue supporting children during school closures. As some countries will soon turn their attention towards school reopening, meals and health programmes can provide incentives for families to send their children back to school. Without them, many – especially girls – won't resume their

¹ FSIN, 2020 <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2020-global-report-food-crises>

education, resulting in a lost generation that will never recover from this crisis.

Based on its global experience and partnerships, WFP is uniquely positioned to:

- support school reopening: WFP, the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF have developed a framework to support national preparations to safely reopen schools. WFP and UNICEF have also launched a global health and nutrition campaign to support return to school. Working with partners, WFP can help governments put in place robust school feeding and health programmes, ensure appropriate physical distancing and prevention efforts, and promote proper water, sanitation and hygiene services for school children and staff;
- advise governments on alternative ways to deliver school feeding programmes while schools are closed, and support linkages with social safety nets.

Nutrition – It is essential that nutritionally vulnerable populations do not get left behind or deprioritized during the COVID-19 response. Many countries will have to dramatically shift the way at-risk groups, especially women, infants and young children, receive preventive and life-saving support as movement restrictions and service prioritization affect access to clinics and nutrition services.

WFP can leverage existing partnerships and support governments to:

- deliver essential medicines, non-pharmaceutical supplies and specialized nutritious foods;
- shift service delivery from health facilities to the communities;
- scale-up interventions for individuals whose nutritional status has been affected by the pandemic;
- use data collection and analysis to assess access to food and nutrition, identify the most vulnerable populations, and target key interventions for the delivery of preventive services;
- advocate for the strengthening of services for those at risk of being left behind in the response.

3. FOOD SYSTEMS

The COVID-19 pandemic is placing significant stress on all components of food systems (production, trade and distribution, and consumption), threatening the food security and livelihoods of millions of vulnerable people. Sustaining, protecting and improving food systems during the crisis is vital to reduce economic and food insecurity risks to communities, especially the most vulnerable, and enable a quicker and more inclusive recovery.

WFP can build on its partnerships to support governments and work with actors along the food value chain – from farmers to traders, processors, distributors, and retailers – to:

- sustain and strengthen market functions by leveraging WFP's supply chain expertise to help ensure food availability, also through the procurement and provision of timely market information;
- increase smallholder farmers' productivity and reduce post-harvest loss by supporting producers' access to seeds, fertilizers, assets, services and markets;
- protect the livelihoods of smallholder value chain actors through programmes that create income and job opportunities;
- ensure the food and nutrition needs of vulnerable populations are met by linking to social protection and nutrition systems and through interventions such as home-grown school feeding.

Across these three areas – social protection systems, basic service delivery and food systems – WFP will support national responses to save lives and protect livelihoods while strengthening systems to reinforce government leadership and accountability.

With a focus on the countries, groups and people most at risk of being left behind, WFP's actions will help achieve the objectives of the integrated support package offered by the United Nations Development System to protect the needs and rights of people living under the duress of the pandemic.

1. Introduction

Countries across the globe are facing a “development emergency.” There is urgent need to support their responses to the immediate and longer-term impact of COVID-19. To do this, emergency, development and prevention programming must be integrated to deliver joint outcomes. This includes sustaining and scaling up food and nutrition assistance components for critical lifesaving and livelihood protection activities.

The socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic require a comprehensive, coherent and collaborative response – delivered quickly and at scale. Governments are primarily responsible for protecting populations and ensuring the essential needs of all persons are equitably met. Given its enabling and delivery capabilities and roles within both the UN Development System (UNDS) and the international humanitarian architecture, WFP is uniquely positioned to support governments and partners to quickly adapt, design and deliver their own interventions. WFP’s presence in over 80 countries, at national and sub-national levels, further enables rapid scale-up and direct delivery of complementary programmes where required.

WFP’s contribution to the global response will be further defined, operationalized and risk-managed based on country needs in collaboration with WFP regional bureaus, country offices and partners. WFP’s approach is fully aligned with the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19,² within which the UNDS is shifting into an emergency mode of working. It maintains alignment of WFP country-level planning with any adjustments in Global Humanitarian Response Plans, National Development Plans and UNDAF/UNSDCFs. WFP will work in partnership the humanitarian system partners, UNDS, international financial institutions (IFIs), civil society organizations and the private sector to help governments sustain, scale and complement national responses to save lives, protect people and build back better.

As a Programme of the United Nations, WFP will ensure the support it provides protects the human rights, equality and dignity of all persons without discrimination, and that no one is left behind. WFP and its partners will uphold the primary obligation to do no harm and ensure

that assistance is provided in a safe, inclusive, equitable and dignified manner; that affected populations in their diversity can influence what assistance they receive and how it is designed, delivered, monitored and adapted; and that activities support social cohesion and trust, and do not exacerbate or promote conflict, or cause environmental harm.

WFP’s medium-term response

In defining the programmatic framework to address the medium-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP has identified three pillars of intervention that are central to effective, efficient and equitable responses and where WFP has demonstrated value as a partner to governments and others. These are: support for national social protection systems; basic service delivery – in particular school-based programmes and nutrition; and food systems. This framework builds on the system-wide L3 emergency activation and covers the period from May 2020 to the end of the year and beyond.

Within each pillar, WFP can provide support in three overlapping areas: data and analytics, policy and programme advice, and operational support. Core cross-cutting priorities including protection, gender, livelihood support, environmental standards and digital transformation will be integrated across all forms of support.

WFP is resolute to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to the global commitment to end poverty, hunger and inequality. WFP’s Vision of Zero Hunger through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is being adjusted and expanded to cater for COVID-19 related needs. Keeping the SDGs as guiding reference, reprogramming efforts have already started in close collaboration with host governments, country programmes, donors and partners to ensure the promise of the 2030 Agenda to ‘leave no one behind’ is delivered and lasting impact is achieved in the spirit of WFP’s ‘Changing Lives’ mandate.

² <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19>

2. Projected impact and populations of concern

While the impacts of the socio-economic crisis generated by COVID-19 are being felt globally, low- and middle-income countries will be disproportionately affected. Under-developed and under-resourced systems are less able to contain and treat the immediate health effects of the pandemic, as well as the longer-term socio-economic ones. The projected global economic contraction,³ integrated nature of economic activity and dependence on volatile global import, export and credit markets signal negative consequences for trade and employment. Limited fiscal space and high debt will restrict many countries' ability to respond to increasing needs.

The large-scale economic disruption caused by the pandemic is reducing household income significantly, limiting the ability to meet essential needs and weakening both households' and countries' potential to recover post-crisis. Many families are likely to experience food price spikes and volatile or reduced food availability or accessibility. Food price spikes can be devastating for low-income households, especially those that depend on markets for basic access to food. As the percentage of household income spent on food increases, diets become less nutritious and less money is spent on key basic

services such as health and education.

Pre-existing inequalities, including those pertaining to gender, disability, health, civil status and income will be exacerbated. Poverty and vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition are likely to both deepen among already poor and marginalized populations and expand among groups previously able to meet their food and nutrition needs. The effects of the pandemic are projected to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, with the number of people suffering acute food insecurity likely to almost double from 135 million to 270 million.⁴

Populations at risk

While anyone can contract COVID-19, personal, situational, socio-cultural and structural factors create different levels and types of risk. The risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic include: risk of infection; risk of severe complication; and risk of socio-economic and other indirect impacts, such as gender-based violence.⁵ Individuals may fall into one or more of these categories, which interact with pre-existing risk factors including gender, age, disability and poverty.



³ IMF, 2020 <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/06/24/WEOUpdateJune2020>

⁴ FSIN, 2020 <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2020-global-report-food-crises>

⁵ UN, 2020: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_women_9_april_2020.pdf

Groups at higher risk of infection include health system workers and home caregivers, workers in essential, daily-wage and informal/irregular sectors unable to self-isolate, and people living in densely-populated environments. Once infected, older people and those with underlying medical conditions – including malnutrition and pre-existing disease – are at higher risk of developing severe illness or complications.

Based on the combination of these factors, it is possible to identify groups that are particularly at risk of not being able to meet their essential needs, including food and nutrition, and whose circumstances and needs should be prioritized and supported in national responses to the COVID-19 crisis. These are:

- urban populations and those living in densely populated environments,⁶ including camps hosting internally displaced people and refugees;
- individuals and households living below or close to the poverty line, who depend on wage labour, micro-enterprise or engagement with the informal economy for access to food, the majority of whom are women;
- irregular migrants and marginalized groups with limited access to social services, such as ethnic minorities and people with disabilities;
- people with underlying medical conditions and poor nutritional status, including acute malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, HIV/ AIDs, tuberculosis and respiratory illnesses;
- girls and women;
- school-aged children currently not in school or at risk of drop-out;⁷
- single-parent and female-headed households;
- older persons;
- unpaid caregivers, who are disproportionately women and girls.

With an emphasis on inclusion and equity – and, as feasible, gender-transformation – WFP will identify and support partners in determining the particular needs,

preferences, opportunities and circumstances of affected persons, in their diversity. The collected data and consequent analyses will inform decision making.⁹



⁶ i.e. megacities, informal settlements, slums, prisons, refugee or IDP camps

⁷ WFP - <https://www.wfp.org/publications/mitigating-effects-covid-19-pandemic-food-and-nutrition-schoolchildren>

⁸ WHO - <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

⁹ See the background paper to the 32nd ALNAP annual meeting - <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/background-paper-alnap-32nd-annual-meeting-more-relevant-10-ways-to-approach-what> – for ten dimensions of a relevant response, being comprehensive, inclusive, holistic, dynamic, polyphonic, choice, tailored, co-designed, adaptive and complementary.



3. Government priorities

Across the world, governments are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with the tools and resources they have at hand. Multi-sectoral taskforces are being coordinated by executive branches, creating the necessary infrastructure to balance the many emerging needs as well as identify clear points of entry for international actors to contribute to national response efforts.

Health response – The primary objective of governments has been to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and treat those affected. To the degree they are able, governments are rapidly expanding and reinforcing health systems. However, most health systems in low and middle-income countries remain dramatically under-resourced and at risk of collapse without external support. In the short term, governments need assistance to ensure access to and uninterrupted supply of life-saving health services including essential medications and personal protective equipment.

Food security – In the initial phases of the response, the priority has been to ensure national-level food availability. As the crisis continues, action will be needed to ensure that labour and input disruptions do not

impact food production and market availability, and that last-mile supply chains, which are critical for household and individual food security, are protected. Preparedness actions for natural and climate-related risks and gender-responsive monitoring are critical, given the potential of further shocks which could compound food insecurity.

Social protection – In the short term, governments are adapting and expanding existing tools to help mitigate the social and economic effects of the crisis. Countries have tried to maintain programmes – such as those addressing nutrition and providing HIV-related services – that reach those most vulnerable to COVID-19, along with expanding the coverage of social protection systems to include new people, and modifying the types, amounts and timing of assistance provided. Beyond the initial phases of the response, governments are exploring means to improve the effectiveness of ongoing interventions through better understanding of varied needs, scaling up cash-based safety nets and expanding coverage in urban areas. In some countries, financial mechanisms to address climate hazards, such as sovereign climate risk insurance, are necessary to protect at-risk populations from compound COVID-19/climate disasters.

4. WFP's programme framework

Recognizing the responsibility and leadership governments have, WFP and its partners will provide support to effectively and equitably sustain, expand and complement national responses and systems. This approach builds on WFP's history of supporting governments through capacity strengthening

interventions that leverage its technical expertise and operational knowledge to meet country-specific needs.

WFP has identified three mutually reinforcing national-level programmatic pillars that are critical to an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, and where WFP has proven expertise and capacities:



WFP can work with governments and partners, including other UN agencies, IFIs, international organizations, non-government organizations and the private sector, to develop tailored packages of support within and across the three pillars, drawing on its portfolio of expertise and its experience supporting countries respond to essential needs.¹⁰ Within each pillar, WFP and its partners will contribute in three key ways:

- **Data and analytics** – WFP is a leader in data collection and the provision and analysis of actionable information on food security and essential needs that can inform the design and implementation of effective policies and programmes.
- **Policy and programme advice** – WFP offers technical and policy advice to strengthen national responses based on over 50 years of experience designing and delivering effective food and nutrition assistance programmes in emergency and development contexts.
- **Operational support** – WFP is present in more than 80 countries and can rapidly deploy food, cash, livelihood and capacity strengthening programmes to expand

and complement national systems. It also has an extensive supply chain network to support its operations, which is providing a backbone for global COVID-19 response efforts, enabling a steady flow of humanitarian and health cargo and workers to the frontlines.

Together, these areas cover WFP's capacities from supply chain management to integrated programme development or both emergency and development contexts. WFP will support innovation and employ its expertise in digital platforms and data analytics for registration, beneficiary information and transfer management to enhance response options and augment government capacities. WFP can also broker support by mobilizing technical expertise from countries in the Global South that have successfully strengthened their own systems and developed approaches to address food insecurity.

Supporting national responses in this way contributes to achieving the five pillars of the UNDS Framework for Immediate Socio-economic Response: health; social protection and basic services; economic recovery; macro-economic response; and social cohesion and community resilience.

¹⁰ WFP has extensive experience delivering country capacity strengthening interventions in a wide range of situations. WFP is able to engage with national stakeholders to leverage its technical expertise and operational knowledge to fit the country context, be it through shorter-term service provision to long-term partnerships in systems strengthening.

5. Programmatic response pillars

5.1 National social protection systems

Drawing on decades of experience in safety net programming in crisis contexts, and on technical expertise in analysis, assessment, programme design, delivery systems and accountability to affected populations, WFP offers its support to governments to design and deliver social assistance responses to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, including large-scale responses.

WFP will work with governments and interested partners to:

- increase understanding of needs and changing vulnerabilities arising from the crisis, and design appropriate responses;
- adapt existing safety nets to increase the value or coverage of social assistance mechanisms, or to enable them to continue to function;
- establish new schemes to reach populations that are not covered by current safety nets;
- maintain programmes that protect populations from other shocks that compound COVID;
- strengthen national social protection and emergency response systems and their coordination.

WFP can offer value to governments in a variety of roles:

- **Technical advisor:** in this ‘enabling’ role, WFP deploys the technical strengths it derives from its analytical and operational capacities to help governments understand the essential needs of affected people, assess policy options and design social protection responses—either the adaptation of existing programmes or the introduction of new ones—which the government itself will deliver.
- **Service provider:** when relevant and appropriate, WFP can provide services to governments in the implementation of their social protection programmes – in part or entirely. This may be through a contractual arrangement with governments. The deliverables would count as contributing towards the

governments’ own programmes and strategies and may be government-branded.

- **Complementary actor:** even when WFP delivers assistance using its own resources and systems, neither channelled through nor branded as a government programme, it can still do so in a way that contributes to the strengthening of national social protection systems. This could include, for example, sharing knowledge, aligning interventions with government activities and policies, or directly assisting beneficiaries not currently covered by government support or other assistance.



Supporting national responses to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 is in line with WFP’s longer-term intent to contribute to the establishment and strengthening of national social protection systems that support people in meeting their essential needs, contribute to food security and nutrition, and reduce the need for humanitarian intervention.

In line with the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19, the potential types of support that WFP can provide are summarised in the following table. References to cash and in-kind transfers include different programmes that have transfer components including public works, asset and livelihood creation, school feeding and nutrition-sensitive safety nets.

NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

DATA AND ANALYSIS

ASSESSMENTS	<p>WFP's expertise in context analysis, vulnerability and needs assessments, essential needs analysis (multidimensional poverty analysis), and food security, nutrition, market, prices and supply chain analysis can be put at the service of governments' policy choices and help to target the most vulnerable or affected populations. WFP also has expertise in analysis-based assurance solutions to ensure that the right beneficiaries are reached and any issues or anomalies are detected and course-corrected in real time.</p>
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING	<p>WFP has real-time monitoring systems in place in many countries, allowing continuous collection, analysis and visualization of food consumption, community coping strategies, climate shocks and conflicts. These can be expanded to incorporate additional data to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on assisted populations and programme implementation. Data collection tools are continuously expanded with the most current and innovative digital technologies. WFP can help governments establish monitoring systems to track programme outcomes, and to evaluate and review their responses including through lessons-learned workshops.</p>

POLICY AND PROGRAMME ADVICE

DESIGN AND VALIDATION OF TARGETING APPROACH	<p>WFP can support the analysis of people's immediate and longer-term needs, vulnerabilities, risks and resiliencies, and advise on and/or validate targeting strategies, including eligibility criteria, for large-scale responses. In fragile contexts, WFP's access to and understanding of people in the most vulnerable situations is a valuable asset.</p>
TYPE OF SUPPORT	<p>WFP can help design programmes with the appropriate transfer modality, value and duration, and with complementary measures as needed. This includes cash transfers that meet people's essential needs, in-kind transfers that meet people's food and nutrition security needs, or other income-transfer measures such as fee waivers or subsidised insurance.</p>
POLICY/ REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	<p>WFP can support governments to draw up guidelines and standard operating procedures for programme delivery.</p>
INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS	<p>WFP can support governments to develop or adjust the platforms and infrastructure for programme delivery and coordination, including information systems.</p>
PROGRAMME ADJUSTMENT OR DESIGN	<p>WFP can support governments to adjust existing cash and in-kind transfers, or design and implement any or all aspects of new operations, depending on context, financial and human resources, market conditions, and the circumstances and preferences of affected populations. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting and registration: identification and registration of beneficiaries. • Benefit delivery: Support to the government to determine how the transfer can best be delivered, including by designing appropriate delivery mechanisms that promote beneficiary choice and financial inclusion and strengthen local markets. • Accountability: Mechanisms that maximise accountability to affected populations. • Advocacy, essential information and communication throughout the programme cycle.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DELIVERY	<p>WFP can directly design and deliver safety net programmes that expand or complement existing government programmes, including support with digital beneficiary information management, transfer management and assurance systems. In case of new needs, programmes directly delivered by WFP can also address time-sensitive implementation gaps. In all cases, programmes can be designed to enable a gradual transition to government ownership over time. WFP's portfolio included more than US\$2 billion in cash-based transfers delivered in 2019, while ensuring high standards for programmes including digital beneficiary information management, transfer management and assurance systems.</p>
COMPOUND HAZARDS	<p>WFP can help governments maintain safety nets against other hazards which are likely to occur on top of COVID – such as the ARC Replica program or forecast-based financing for climate-related risks.</p>

5.2 Access to basic services - School-based programming and nutrition

Basic social services are the building blocks for societal function and human development. At times of crisis, their provision is foundational to preserve life and livelihoods, and enable recovery. School closures and population movement restrictions are making it harder for those in the most vulnerable situations to access the services they require. The COVID-19 pandemic is stretching the delivery of national school-based programmes and nutrition services as countries work to save lives and mitigate disease spread.



SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMMES

The massive impact of school closures on children has highlighted the importance of school feeding programmes as a crucial, widespread safety net that supports children and their families. Around 70 countries have already adapted their programmes to continue supporting children during school closures and will start turning their attention towards schools reopening and the role that school feeding can play to attract children back to education.

The cost of inaction would be very high. With schools closed, learning is compromised and the risk of drop-out increased. Adolescent girls and other groups which systematically lack equal access to education are at

particular risk. Removed from the protective environment of school, the risk that children will be neglected, abused or exploited grows, especially for girls. The heightened socio-economic challenges many families face increase already high risks of early marriage, pregnancy and gender-based violence for girls, and possible recruitment by non-state actors in conflict-affected countries.

Meals and health programmes can provide incentives for families to send their children back to school. Without them, many won't come back, especially girls, resulting in a lost generation of children who will never recover from this crisis.

This is an area where WFP is uniquely positioned to respond, and its leadership has been recognized globally during this crisis.

In particular, WFP can support governments to make decisions along the following stages during this crisis:

- During school closures: WFP can advise governments on alternative ways to deliver school feeding and support linkages with social safety-nets. Options range from take-home rations to vouchers and cash transfers, integrated within broader social protection responses.
- As governments start to prepare for school re-opening: as leaders are grappling with difficult trade-offs as they consider easing closures, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and WFP have developed a framework to inform decision making on when to reopen schools, and are supporting national preparations to guide the implementation process. In partnership with UNICEF, WFP will help governments ensure that children's access to nutritious school meals is restored safely along with essential services that reinforce public health including safe water, hygiene and sanitation.
- Where schools are open: WFP can provide guidance and work with partners to ensure context-appropriate physical distancing and prevention efforts, and promote proper water, sanitation and hygiene services and behaviours for school children and staff.

ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES: SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMMING

DATA AND ANALYSIS

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection and analysis. The provision of data and analysis can help governments make informed decisions on reopening schools and identifying alternative distribution modalities during closures. WFP will build upon existing school health and nutrition data sets and data-collection mechanisms to assess the overall impact of COVID 19 on the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. Information is collected at individual, school, household and community levels to identify:

- *changed vulnerabilities and marginalization* of school-age children and their families, including their locations, to target additional vulnerable children;
- *evolved barriers in accessing education*, particularly for girls, to identify appropriate support to bring them back to school and help them stay there;
- *additional gaps in school, health and nutrition infrastructure and services*, to allow for an overview on investments needed and the formulation of action plans to address gaps in the short, medium and longer term;
- *options on how to carry out additional transfers* to ease the return of children to schools as well as on incentives and alternative transfers during school closures;
- *knowledge and behaviours of communities* around children's food, health and nutrition, school canteens, and possibilities for schools to bring together divided communities.

Analysis must acknowledge existing limitations and goals to improve operations and learning. WFP's partnership with UNICEF offers opportunities for joint analysis on vulnerability, health and nutrition.

POLICY AND PROGRAMME ADVICE

POLICY SUPPORT

WFP can support governments through technical assistance on policy re-formulation, coordination, multisectoral-linkages and adjustments to improve schooling and safety of school feeding operations, expand access to marginalized groups, and reinforce smallholder farmers' role in the supply chain. WFP can also support policy changes to enable different ways to provide transfers.

BEST PRACTICES

WFP can help document and share global lessons learned, good practices, standards and norms, including by facilitating South-South cooperation.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

RESPONSES SHOULD IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES, INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND STRENGTHEN THE PROTECTION, HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN. GOVERNMENTS MAY CONSIDER THE NEED FOR WFP | TO DIRECTLY PROVIDE SERVICES TO ADDRESS GAPS. AMONG OTHERS, WFP CAN OFFER THE FOLLOWING SUPPORT:

TARGETING

Engaging with governments and partners to ensure targeting approaches include the most marginalized areas/schools, taking into consideration shifting and emerging vulnerabilities.

ADJUSTING DISTRIBUTION MODALITIES

Identifying implementation adjustments made necessary as the situation evolves, and providing information, education and communication materials on health, nutrition, hygiene, safety and protection.

ADJUSTING TRANSFER MODALITIES

Recommending changes, such as switching from on-site feeding to cash transfers, that build on WFP's supply chain, cash-based transfer and food systems expertise.

SUPPORTING ADDITIONAL FOOD OR CASH TRANSFERS

Supporting governments in identifying and implementing transfers to eliminate economic barriers and to maximize re-enrolment and attendance rates.

ADDRESSING GAPS IN SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Providing support, together with partners, to address school infrastructure gaps, including kitchens, storage areas, water and sanitation.

INTEGRATED PACKAGE PROVISION

Supporting governments, in partnership with others and particularly UNICEF, in the provision of school-based nutrition and health services.

NUTRITION

It is essential that nutritionally vulnerable populations do not get left behind or deprioritized for health services support during the COVID-19 response, especially in contexts where access to services is inequitable. It is anticipated that many countries will have to dramatically shift the way at-risk groups – especially pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, infants, young children and adolescents – receive preventive and life-saving support as movement restrictions and service prioritization affect access to clinics and nutrition services. As health information systems are constrained, screening, surveys and surveillance will also need to be adapted so that vital data is available to governments to understand the impact of COVID-19 on diverse population groups and to track the effectiveness of programme delivery.

Health facilities will have to adapt safely, and systematically provide preventative services and support the treatment of malnourished women and children with a flexible approach that allows for more service delivery in the community, including the provision of nutrition services through outposts, mobile clinics and community-run programmes.

WFP has identified five entry points to leverage existing partnerships and support governments:

- Supply chain excellence – With its presence across the entire supply chain, from planning and sourcing to delivery and transfer, WFP can help governments deliver essential medicines, non-pharmaceutical supplies and the specialized nutritious foods needed for the treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition.
- Focus on communities – As health systems are overwhelmed, WFP can support a shift in service delivery from health facilities to the communities. Flexible arrangements are needed to identify and treat acute malnutrition while ensuring continued emphasis on prevention and nutrition-sensitive approaches. WFP also supports the delivery of primary health care interventions including immunizations.
- Scale-up of nutrition interventions – Expanding existing nutrition programmes would ensure that individuals whose nutritional status has been affected by the pandemic are supported with prevention and treatment services through health, community and government platforms. Interventions should treat and prevent all forms of malnutrition – including wasting, stunting, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity – developed as a result of a prolonged economic and food security crisis. A well-coordinated multisectoral approach will mitigate the likely multiple effects of COVID19 on nutrition.
- Innovative data collection and analysis – WFP can help governments assess the implications of COVID-19 on access to food and nutrition, identify the most vulnerable populations requiring nutrition and health support, and target key interventions, including actions through other relevant systems (food systems, social protection, WASH) for the delivery of preventive services to vulnerable groups.
- Support and advocacy – WFP can support and advocate for the continuation and strengthening of health and nutrition support for the women, girls, older persons, people with disabilities and people living with HIV and tuberculosis who risk being left behind in the COVID-19 response.



ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES: NUTRITION

DATA AND ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS	WFP can provide health and nutrition context analysis, poverty and vulnerability assessments, essential needs assessments, domestic energy assessments, market price and supply chain analysis.
IDENTIFICATION OF VULNERABILITIES	Based on a review of nutritious diet affordability pre-crisis, WFP can model scenarios in regard to changes in income and prices to predict where vulnerability to malnutrition and food insecurity increases are most likely.
PROGRAMME ADAPTATION	WFP can review proposed intervention packages, including those delivered through the health and education sectors, for potential nutritional impact.
DATA COLLECTION	Digital tools can be used to support mobile data collection and to make nutrition data available to inform improved services and programme and policy decision making.

POLICY AND PROGRAMME ADVICE

WFP HAS EXPERTISE IN ADVOCACY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION (SBCC) AND CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

ASSESSMENTS	WFP can conduct rapid assessments (gender- and age- informed) of context-specific behavioural barriers and enablers to individuals, households and communities.
COMMUNITY-LEVEL WORK	WFP can contribute to harmonised community engagement and risk communication strategies and messages.
COMMUNITY ACCESS	WFP can deliver lifesaving information to hard-to-reach communities (including those in contested control) through SBCC campaigns based on the use of interpersonal communication channels and mass media.
ACCOUNTABILITY	Existing WFP feedback mechanisms, community consultations and two-way communication channels can be adapted to quickly respond to questions, complaints and misconceptions, and enable safe access by all populations.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

DELIVERY	To enable the continuation of life-saving nutrition services, WFP can support supply chains and directly deliver food and non-food items, including medicines, at health facility or community level.
RELOCATION OF SERVICES	To mitigate the impact of COVID 19 on access to and availability of nutrition services in health facilities, WFP can leverage its field presence and longstanding community engagement to support the relocation of malnutrition prevention and treatment services at the community level.
EXPANSION OF SERVICES	In collaboration with partners in the health, food, nutrition, education and energy sectors, WFP can expand and integrate essential maternal and child health and nutrition services at community level, wherever appropriate, ensuring recommended measures and standards are in place and building on existing resilience frameworks and convergence models wherever relevant.

5.3 Food systems

The significant stress the COVID-19 pandemic is placing on food systems, especially in lower-middle income countries and fragile states where these are already flawed or disrupted, is threatening the food security and livelihoods of millions of vulnerable people.

The crisis is impacting all components of food systems: production, trade and distribution, and consumption. This is affecting actors and livelihoods along the food value chain: farmers, traders, processors, distributors, retailers, as well as the millions of consumers that rely on their efforts to meet their basic food and nutrition needs. Production is likely to be affected from disrupted access to inputs, labour, services and markets. Volatile global commodity markets, trade and border policies, movement restrictions and market closures threaten food trade and distribution networks. Household food security is at increased risk from income loss, price spikes and volatile or reduced access to adequate and nutritious food.

Sustaining, protecting and improving food systems during the crisis is vital to reduce economic and food insecurity risks to communities, especially the most vulnerable, and enable a quicker and more inclusive and sustainable recovery. As a result, effective and coherent action is required across national food systems in synergy with social assistance interventions.

WFP's experience, capacity and partnerships span the full breadth of food systems. WFP's expertise in food system and market data collection and analysis, supply chain and procurement, smallholder farmer support, post-harvest loss prevention and value chain actor programming enables it to support governments in assessing the impacts on the various components of food systems and design and implement interventions to ensure they deliver food security and nutrition for all. Food systems support interventions need to be integrated with social assistance and income transfer programmes to ensure sufficient and nutritious food is available and affordable for low-income households. In partnership with other UN agencies, in particular the Rome-based agencies, and with the private sector, WFP can support governments in:

- **Supporting production** – WFP can leverage its programmatic expertise and partnerships to increase smallholder farmers' productivity and reduce post-harvest loss by supporting producers' access to inputs, assets, services and markets, and enhancing their capacity to mitigate climate adversity and other compounding shocks.
- **Supporting food supply chains and markets** – WFP and its partners can leverage WFP's supply chain and procurement expertise to support governments and private sector actors in sustaining and strengthening market functions to facilitate food movement and availability. WFP can support market stability including through the provision of timely market information and communication at both the national and local levels.
- **Protecting the livelihoods of smallholder value chain actors and communities** – WFP can build on its knowledge of and experience in food value chains to work with governments to design and implement targeted programmes that support the livelihoods of the most vulnerable, protecting and creating income and job/business opportunities, including through innovative approaches.
- **Ensuring the food and nutrition needs of vulnerable populations are met – both now and in the future** – WFP and its partners can help ensure food systems provide adequate, safe and nutritious food for all by securing linkages to social protection and nutrition systems and interventions, such as home-grown school feeding, to create holistic support from production to consumption, and making sure that food systems contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.

FOOD SYSTEMS

DATA AND ANALYSIS

MONITORING AND ANALYSIS

WFP can collect and analyse data on domestic food production, trade and consumption, supplemented with global and regional food trade developments.

ASSESSMENTS

WFP can provide system-wide and 'last mile' supply and value chain assessments, as well as assessments on livelihoods, markets and financial services, climate impact and policy development.

POLICY AND PROGRAMME ADVICE

WFP CAN HELP GOVERNMENTS DEVELOP AND OPERATIONALIZE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO:

INTEGRATE FOOD SYSTEMS WITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE policy to ensure food access and availability, stimulating production and markets, including local production of specialized nutritious food

PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN THE LIVELIHOODS OF FOOD SYSTEMS ACTORS
(smallholder farmers and value chain actors)

ADVOCATE FOR POST-HARVEST LOSSES INTERVENTIONS to reduce food loss and waste

INTEGRATE FOOD SYSTEMS WITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE policy to ensure food access and availability, stimulating production and markets, including local production of specialized nutritious food

prioritize investment and capacity to **ADDRESS FOOD SYSTEM BOTTLENECKS**

IMPROVE CROSS-SECTORAL AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION AND alignment

adopt a **VALUE CHAIN FRAMEWORK** to strengthen and re-build better food systems

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

PRODUCTION SUPPORT AND REDUCTION OF FOOD LOSS

WFP can implement food assistance for assets interventions related to food production; provide capacity strengthening for smallholder farmers and value chain actors; facilitate access to credit, inputs and equipment as well as markets, linking producers and buyers including using digital solutions and e-commerce; and use its purchasing power to increase local purchases including through its Global Commodity Management Facility, local actors or supporting governments (food reserves).

SUPPLY CHAINS AND MARKETS

WFP can provide capacity strengthening for supply chain and infrastructure (roads, storage, electricity, water), and support downstream value chain actors (transport, logistic, retailers) as well as upstream ones (manufacturers, national authorities etc.), including with improved food packaging and food quality standards.

PROTECTION OF THE LIVELIHOODS OF SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AND COMMUNITIES

WFP can implement food assistance for assets interventions and provide cash for asset creation, to enable income generation and support household livelihoods through productive community assets. This can also include providing skills training on off-farm livelihoods and exploring the expansion of climate risk insurance coverage in existing programs.

ENSURING FOOD CONSUMPTION BY THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

WFP can implement tailored cash-based interventions integrated with social assistance to support vulnerable households in accessing adequate and nutritious food. SBCC and community engagement can be leveraged to promote the purchase of fresh and nutritious foods.

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World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 65131 wfp.org