



WFP Mauritania

Country Brief

June 2020

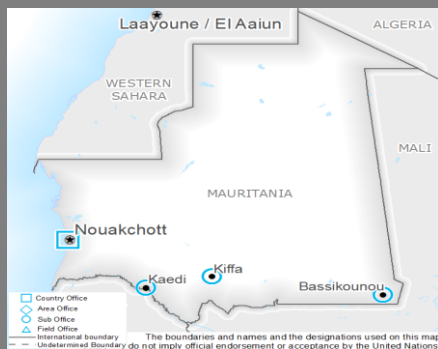
World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel with a population of 4.7 million that lives over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km² territory. Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought, resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity, resilience and food security of the population. According to projections from the November 2019, *Cadre Harmonisé*, 609,180 people will face crisis food insecurity between June and August 2020. Major concerns relate to subsistence farmers who rely primarily on rainfed agriculture and pastoralists whose livelihoods depend on largely depleted rangeland. Against this backdrop, the August 2019 SMART survey indicated that 21 departments (out of 53) are above the severe acute malnutrition emergency threshold of 2 percent. WFP operations are currently focused on recovery-interventions to improve food security and reduce malnutrition, enhance education achievements, minimise gender inequalities as well as strengthen institutional capacity and help communities adapt to climate change. Mauritania hosts the second largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with more than 60,000 refugees registered in Mbera camp. The COVID-19 food insecurity projection assessed close to 902,000 people facing food insecurity, a 48 percent increase from the last *Cadre Harmonisé*. On May 2020, the Mauritanian government announced a national response plan against the new coronavirus and WFP supports the rollout of this plan in close coordination with United Nations and Non-Governmental Partners. In line with the guidelines set by the United Nations country team, the WFP office in Mauritania has been implementing its Business Continuity Plan since 20 March.



Population: **4.7 million**

2018 Human Development Index: **161 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **19.6%** of children between 6-59 months

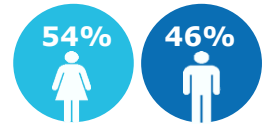
In Numbers

39.5 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 2.6 m cash-based transfers made

USD 20.5 m six months (July-December 2020) net funding requirements

113,563 people assisted in June 2020



Operational Updates

- Lean season interventions among the most vulnerable Mauritanian populations started during the month of June with the launch of cash transfer distributions in Tagant and Guidimakha regions. To prevent the spread of the COVID-19, distribution measures have been taken, notably the double ration, in order to avoid frequent gatherings. These double distributions cover the months of June and July and reached 53,560 people. A total amount of USD 1,242,519 was distributed. This intervention enables beneficiaries to cover their food needs and ensure their food security in a difficult period. The early arrival of the lean season combined with the consequences of the preventive measures of COVID-19 reinforced food insecurity among vulnerable populations. In Mbera camp, from 2 to 8 June, 990,188 mt of food was distributed to 60,003 refugees and USD 1,396,600 was distributed as cash transfers to 57,633 refugees. These distributions are part of WFP's response plan to the COVID-19 crisis. WFP and UNHCR exceptionally agreed that all refugees would receive food assistance through food distributions and cash transfers in order to prevent any deterioration of their food security and nutritional situation and to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Regarding the prevention and the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), from 12 to 15 June, a door-to-door screening of 3,967 children aged 6 to 59 months and 715 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) was carried out in Mbera camp. A lack of nutritional inputs, due to stock shortage, forced the malnutrition treatment centres (CRENAMS) to cease its activities. Distributions are planned in July.
- WFP continues to provide logistics services to government, United Nations and non-governmental partners to facilitate effective field operations for the COVID-19 national response plan. In June, WFP supported the Government in transporting donated medical kits to the warehouse. WFP also recruited two staff to support the Ministry of Health in database management and logistics operations at the warehouse.
- The WFP school feeding programme, which benefits more than 50,000 students, has been put on hold due to the government's decision to close schools since mid-March to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Discussions are under way to resume the activity on the 1 September. The possibility of distributing take-home rations (THR) has been abandoned as resources will be used to continue the activity. WFP has started a four-month household assistance in three Wilayas where school canteens are located
- In June, the Government and WFP signed the African Risk Capacity (ARC) drought insurance policy for the 2020 season. This activity is in line with the larger objective of building an adaptive social protection system in the country, requiring effective and appropriate risk financing mechanisms, in which ARC is participating. WFP has provided to the members of the CSA technical working group (TWG), in charge of ARC with 10 modems to facilitate remote working sessions.

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Main photo Credit: WFP/Melissa Marques

Caption: Reception of logistic material at WFP warehouse

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2020 Total Requirements (in USD) - before budget revision	2020 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
32.6 m	29 m	20.5 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and preventive nutrition ration and MAM treatment to refugees

Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Food-insecure populations, including school-age children, have access to adequate and nutritious food all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment
- Provide school meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

Strategic Result 3: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls, have improved nutritional status all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and lactating women and girls attending pre/post-natal care

Strategic Result 4: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks have more resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets

Strategic Result 5: Country strategic capacities

Strategic Outcome 5: National institutions have strengthened capacities to manage food security, nutrition and social protection policies and programmes, including an adaptive (shock responsive) social protection system, by 2030.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide training and technical support to government institutions

Strategic Result 6: Global partnership support

Strategic Outcome 6: Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners, towards humanitarian interventions

These started on 30 June and will continue until November. The first sessions will be devoted to the configuration of the pastoral filter of the drought insurance.

- Food assistance for asset (FFA) activities were suspended from May onwards, in line with the WFP contingency plan to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Discussions are underway on how to restart FFA activities once the restrictions are lifted. WFP participated in an information-gathering exercise, organized by the Dakar Regional Office and ACF, to assess the impact of resilience activities on the nutritional situation of women and children at intervention sites.
- In June, the CSA (*Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire*) select committee, with the support of WFP, finalized the draft legal texts of the early warning and shock response system, which were transmitted to the members of the multisectoral in charge of monitoring the implementation of the system for technical validation.
- As COVID-19 spreads rapidly around the world, international travel was restricted, with the closure of commercial airlines and restrictions on movement. WFP globally is at the forefront of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing essential air transport services that ensure that humanitarian and medical workers are not restricted by the closure of commercial transport and can quickly reach the areas where they are most needed. As of June 12, UNHAS received authorization from the Mauritanian government to resume flights to Kiffa and Néma, allowing humanitarian workers to quickly reach their areas of operation. During the month of June, the UNHAS aircraft flew eight sorties, representing 19, 72 hours of flight time and carrying 37 passengers and 260 kg of cargo. In addition, the COVID medical evacuations are operated by a WFP operator based in Bamako, whose aircraft is equipped with an isolation chamber.

Monitoring

- At the end of June, WFP started data collection via a telephone questionnaire on food security at the Wilaya level. This survey is carried out by Geopoll, a company specializing in mobile data collection. Following this collection, an analysis will be made. In addition, the market bulletins for the Mbera camp are being finalized. Finally, WFP is supporting FAO and the German Cooperation (BMZ) for the first phase of a joint WFP/FAO and BMZ study on the impact of COVID-19 on food security. This study will provide a better understanding of these impacts at the population level and will make it possible to measure variations in people's access to food in the short and medium term.

Challenges

- The budget revision for the increased requirements related to COVID-19 was finalized in June. The main changes concern the additional funding requirements for the creation of two new activities to provide emergency assistance to those affected by the COVID-19 crisis. The first one (activity 8) has been created to provide food assistance and supplementary feeding to pandemic affected populations, while the second one (activity 9) provides on-demand logistics services to Government, United Nations and Non-Governmental partners to facilitate effective field operations. Funding is urgently needed to maintain WFP's operational footprint and to expand it to meet these increased needs. USD 20 million is required for WFP operations in Mauritania for the next six months within the framework of the approved national strategic plan. WFP needs to confirm funding as soon as possible to ensure a rapid response for the next lean season.

Donors

European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Monaco, Private Donors, Saudi Arabia, UN CERF, United Kingdom, USA.