



# WFP COMMON SERVICES BRIEF

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

31 JULY 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused global disruptions to the transport systems and links that health and humanitarian responders would normally rely upon to reach affected areas in a crisis.

WFP, working closely with the World Health Organization, the UN system, the NGO community and governments, is using its logistics capacity and expertise to step in and provide these services where commercial capacity currently doesn't exist, ensuring that critical health and humanitarian personnel and cargo can move to where they are needed most.



WFP/George Ngari

## PASSENGER SERVICES

In a situation where safe and reliable carriers are not operating, WFP's air passenger services have become a lifeline to both existing operations and the urgent health response to the pandemic.

Since its launch on 1 May, WFP has now transported **15,443 health and humanitarian personnel** - 47 percent NGO, 45 percent UN and 8 percent donors - to **53 destinations** over the course of **867 flights**. In line with partner needs, a long-haul service from Rome, Italy to Accra, Ghana commenced on 17 July, establishing an essential connection into West Africa from Europe. Regional flights serving the Latin American region are scheduled to start

at the beginning of August. Demand for WFP's air passenger services remains high, with the service now transporting approximately **2,500 passengers** per week to destinations throughout Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

WFP continues to work closely with host governments to ensure that all flights are carried out in line with national health and safety requirements, as well as meeting WHO recommendations. Commercial flight availability is also being closely monitored and as safe and reliable options become available, WFP services are immediately phased out, as already seen in Tanzania, South Sudan, Lebanon and Egypt.



\*Combining cargo and passengers for an effective response

## MEDEVAC

To ensure the wellbeing of health and humanitarian personnel and to minimise the burden on host country healthcare systems, the UN Secretary-General activated a common COVID-19 Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) System on 22 May. As part of this, a MEDEVAC cell was established, leveraging assets from WFP, WHO and the Department of Operational Support (DOS) to enable a coordinated and centralized approach to COVID-19 related medevacs.

MEDEVAC services are available for all UN staff and eligible dependents worldwide, and all staff of eligible INGO partners and their eligible dependents in countries covered under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. As part of this system, WFP has access to a global network of contracted air ambulances which have so far carried out **33 MEDEVACs** on behalf of humanitarian personnel worldwide.



# CARGO SERVICES

As public health measures were introduced to stem the spread of the virus, air, sea and road transport capacity dropped worldwide and prices rose as demand began to far exceed supply. Supply chain disruptions put the continuation of existing health and humanitarian programmes at risk and severely complicated the immediate health response required to address the pandemic.

To ensure the delivery of critical health and other humanitarian items, WFP utilized its vast supply chain network to establish cargo movement services on behalf of the humanitarian and health communities where commercial capacity was not available. To date, **40,142 m<sup>3</sup>** of cargo has been dispatched on behalf of **49 organizations to 159 countries** – covering over 80 percent of the world. WFP continues to work closely with government and commercial entities to identify opportunities for support to transport cargo, be it financial or through in-kind donations of air assets.



**159 COUNTRIES REACHED**  
Via COVID-19 GHRP free-to-user cargo services, WFP Bilateral Services and UNHRD dispatches

**49 ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED**  
(59% NGO / 14% UN / 18% GOV / 8% Other)

## LOOKING FORWARD

Commercial operations are slowly resuming, however sufficient capacity to support the global health response to COVID-19 does not exist and WFP continues to play a vital role in ensuring that goods and personnel can be moved to where they are needed most. Passenger numbers continue to rise as more destinations are added to WFP’s flight network, and requests to transport cargo are increasing as supplies come online.

The current estimated pipeline requiring WFP transport services for the COVID-19 response is **118,000 m<sup>3</sup>**, which is the equivalent of **181 Boeing 747 payloads**. While a recent reduction in market rates has meant that resources can now

be contracted at lower cost than a few months ago, enabling the extension of both cargo and passenger services for an additional few weeks beyond the previous July deadline, funding is still urgently required to enable WFP to maintain its vital logistics support beyond August.

This is a response on a scale never seen before and with the pandemic showing no signs of slowing and worrying accelerations of infections in vulnerable regions, it is crucial that the response does not stop now when it is needed most. Now is a critical moment for the donor community to come forward and support this collective response with the urgency that it requires.

**US\$201M**  
CURRENT CONTRIBUTIONS



**Donors (in alphabetical order):** Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Liechtenstein, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America. Funds have also been received from UN CERF, and from private donors including: Latter Day Saints Church, Mars, Takeda and UN Foundation.