Operational Context

Since April 2018, Nicaragua has been experiencing an economic decline due to a socio-political and economic crisis, which continues to place it as one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Undernourishment has improved, yet the prevalence of chronic undernutrition is 17 percent, and rates are higher in Madriz (30 per cent), Jinotega, and Nueva Segovia (28 percent). Additionally, obesity and overweight are on the rise.

Nicaragua is vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters, ranking 21st in the World Risk Report (United Nations University, 2019). Food insecurity is closely related to poverty, frequent natural disasters and the effects of climate change.

Agriculture accounts for 17 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the primary source of livelihoods for 90 percent of the rural population, including women and men farmers. However, women farmers face more significant challenges than men to access agricultural markets due to the persistence of a gender gap in rural areas.

WFP supports the Government’s Zero Hunger efforts by strengthening social safety nets, fostering disaster risk reduction and food security of smallholder farmers. WFP has been present in Nicaragua since 1971.

Operational Updates

- COVID-19: In June, the pandemic’s impact continued to worsen with a weekly average of new cases of 300. As of now, the Government has reported 2,846 cases, including 91 deceased people. WFP has continued working to ensure the continuation of operations in COVID-19, adjusting ongoing activities to the current context such as the production of didactic material to inform smallholder farmers how best to safeguard their health and well-being while responding to their food security needs.

- This month, WFP Nicaragua continued to assist the Ministry of Education in the implementation of biosecurity protocols to ensure a safe food delivery through phased food delivery, use of personal protection equipment, and hygiene protocols. Besides, WFP also worked towards the August meal distribution to over 182,000 pre- and primary school children. Following last month’s confirmation of two contributions to cover pipeline breaks for this activity, WFP Nicaragua increased coordination efforts to ensure cost efficiency and reduce food purchasing lead times. Despite COVID-19, the Ministry of Education continues requiring in-person attendance and schools remain open, so this distribution remains scheduled. WFP is monitoring the Ministry’s decisions regarding teaching modalities closely since a transition to distance learning means other family members will now consume beneficiaries’ meals. To combat this and to continue guaranteeing uninterrupted access to nutritious food and alleviating the economic and food burden at home, WFP will continue evaluating how COVID-19 impacts this programme and be prepared to respond.

- WFP Nicaragua continued working with the national government to design a COVID-19 Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan in the event of restrictions in movements, closure of schools, and economic deterioration. The plan, built together with the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response, comprised of national institutions, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and WFP, focuses on assistance to the most vulnerable, including populations in the Dry Corridor, through adapted national social protection programmes. As part of WFP efforts to assist vulnerable people, the last steps required to start cash transfers to vulnerable families took place in June.

Contact info: Maria Victoria Tassano (Mariavictoria.tassano@wfp.org)
Country Director: Antonella D’Aprile
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Nicaragua
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68.4 million</td>
<td>34 million</td>
<td>4.8 million</td>
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### Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

#### Strategic Outcome 1: People in targeted areas who are living in poverty or vulnerable to food insecurity have access to adequate nutritious food all year round by 2023.

**Focus area:** Resilience

**Activities:**
- Provide nutritious school meals to school boys and girls in targeted areas, complementing the national programme, and strengthen national nutrition and gender-sensitive social protection programmes that promote food security.

#### Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

#### Strategic Outcome 4: Populations affected by shocks have access to adequate and nutritious food during and after an emergency

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Activities:**
- Provide food assistance to populations affected by shocks.

### Strategic Result 4: Sustainable Food Systems

#### Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers in targeted areas benefit from sustainable food systems and have strengthened capacities to cope with shocks, climate change and natural hazards by 2023.

**Focus area:** Resilience

**Activities:**
- Provide government institutions with technical assistance in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to reduce the vulnerability to food insecurity of populations prone to disasters.
- Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers to increase their resilience, improve their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to adverse climate events.

### Strategic Result 5: Capacity Strengthening

#### Strategic Outcome 3: National institutions have improved capacities to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment and to incorporate gender-transformative approaches into programmes, contributing to the achievement of zero hunger by 2023

**Focus area:** Root causes

**Activities:**
- Provide technical assistance to the Government in designing and implementing gender-transformative interventions for promoting gender equality and food security and nutrition.

### Disaster Risk Monitoring

- In June, WFP Nicaragua closely monitored the evolution of natural disaster threats, both climatic and geological, throughout the country, in line with its Emergency Preparedness and Response Protocol. Forecasts continue to predict above-normal hurricane activity in the Atlantic Ocean this hurricane season. The forecast is this season will experience from 13 to 19 named storms, out of which up to 10 could become hurricanes.

- During June, WFP also continued to support women and men farmers, organized in farmer organizations, prioritized the essential activities, and provided remote assistance to protect their food security and economic resilience in COVID-19. In June, a total of 1,042 farmers were benefitted through inputs, services and information received. WFP is assisting farmers during the agricultural cycle (2020/2021) through joint preparation of production plans, field visits to monitor crops’ growth, and transmitting information to improve post-harvest handling and commercialization. WFP is also supporting the adoption of COVID-19 preventive measures in the farmer organizations to contain the pandemic risks and provides training to the members of the organizations.

### Gender

- As part of its efforts to advance gender equality for zero hunger, in June, WFP elaborated and agreed with the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention on a strategic plan aimed at strengthening national institutions’ capacities to design and implement gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and emergency interventions. Gender-responsive approaches increase the effectiveness of response programs in the face of emergencies. WFP also collaborated with the Ministry of Women to finalize the Annual Strategic Plan. This plan will be instrumental in WFP’s work towards a Nicaragua with zero hunger and gender equality.

### Challenges

- WFP Nicaragua is in urgent need of USD 4.7 million to support populations affected by shocks in the Dry Corridor. WFP estimates that due to last years’ rainfall deficit, over 75 thousand people need food stocks, cash-based transfers, and livelihood support in the recovery phase.

- Also, a total of USD 74 thousand is needed to provide the Ministry of Education with technical assistance. Capacity strengthening on safe meal delivery, nutrition education and the monitoring system to evaluate the food and nutrition situation are necessary to ensure the combined impacts of the economic recession and COVID-19 do not negatively impact children’s access to nutritious food.

### Donors

European Union, Government of Nicaragua, Luxembourg, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and Switzerland.