Operational Context

While India has made tremendous progress over the last few decades in food grain production and a reduction in malnutrition rates, it continues to bear a huge burden of food and nutrition insecurity, ranking 102nd out of 117 countries on the 2019 Global Hunger Index. Despite recent improvements in the nutritional status of children, the prevalence of malnutrition is well above acceptable levels, and with large number of people, especially women and children, with micronutrient deficiency disorders. The Government of India has undertaken many reforms to their food-based safety nets to better ensure nutrition and food security and, in response to COVID-19, have done even more to address the increased socio-economic needs due to lockdowns and social distancing.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has been working in partnership with the Government of India for more than 50 years to contribute to its efforts to achieve food and nutrition security. WFP is currently doing this by demonstrating scalable pilots and best practices, providing specialized knowledge and international experience for effective implementation of food safety nets and supporting evidence-based analysis. WFP has been supporting the government in their COVID-19 response since mid-March.

Highlights

A series of four thematic information notes were released, summarizing findings from a study on intra-household food distribution and consumption patterns in poor households in Uttar Pradesh. The study explored the gendered norms and practices that govern and influence food distribution and consumption within the household, particularly for women and girls. This information is critical to enhance the inclusivity of Government food safety nets. The study factsheet and four thematic Information Notes can be accessed here.

Operational Updates

Promoting Access to Food

- WFP designed and developed an automatic grain dispensing machine, a project spawned by the WFP Innovation Accelerator. The concept of the Annapurti (Hindi for ‘providing food’) was well-received by the Department of Food and Public Distribution which has now authorized pilots of Annapurti in five locations next month in partnership with WFP. These pilots will be undertaken through the Fair Price Shops which are responsible for providing monthly grain entitlements, to beneficiaries of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The TPDS provides highly subsidized food grains to more than 813 million people each month.

- The Department of Food and Public distribution has agreed to partner with WFP to develop an e-Learning system, which will be used to strengthen the capacity of government stakeholders in areas of new technologies and reforms introduced in the Targeted Public Distribution System. The system is expected to be ready for launch by November 2020 and expected to have at least 20,000 users.

Improved Nutrition

- WFP signed a cooperation agreement with the organization Alive & Thrive in a virtual ceremony. Through this partnership, WFP will develop a robust and contextualized strategy for social and behavioural change communication. This strategy will complement WFP’s work in Rajasthan which focuses on improving nutrition knowledge and habits of the target population in Jaisalmer District.

- WFP has finalized a set of three posters on food safety and hygiene in community, school and Anganwadi kitchens in Hindi and is adapting/ translating these for dissemination in Kerala and Odisha.

- WFP has signed an agreement with the Department of Women and Child Development, Uttar Pradesh to establish 204 supplementary nutrition production units across 18 districts in the state through women self-help groups, working with the Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission. The project will serve a dual
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

<table>
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<th>Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Aug'20 - Jan'21 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
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**Strategic Result 1:** Everyone has access to food (SDG 2.1)

**Strategic Outcome 1:** The most vulnerable people in India are better able to meet their minimum food and nutrition needs all year round.

**Focus area:** Root Causes

**Activity 1:** Provide policy inputs, advocacy and technical assistance aimed at enhancing the efficiency, targeting, service delivery and supply chain of government programmes for improving access to food.

**Strategic Result 2:** No one suffers from malnutrition (SDG 2.2)

**Strategic Outcome 2:** People at high risk of malnutrition in India, especially women, children and adolescent girls, have improved nutrition by 2025.

**Focus area:** Root Causes

**Activity 2:** Support state and national governments in improving and integrating nutrition policies and programming, including through enhanced quality, advocacy and gender-transformative, systematic approaches.

**Strategic Result 3:** Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs (SDG 17.9)

**Strategic Outcome 3:** National and state institutions have enhanced capacity to deliver on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 and related targets, and collaborate with regional and global partners towards the attainment of SDG 2

**Focus area:** Root Causes

**Activity 3:** Strengthen institutional capacities at various levels in generating, sharing and using evidence for coordinated planning, roll-out and monitoring of actions for attaining Sustainable Development Goal 2.

**Activity 4:** Facilitate the efforts of the Government of India and other countries to share food security and nutrition knowledge and expertise and provide disaster risk management services for the region.

The purpose of improving nutrition and empowering women in the state. WFP will first establish two units for demonstration and learning. As a first step, district officials recently participated in an information session focused on the main concepts of this activity.

- In a meeting with the Ministry of Education, WFP demonstrated the WFP self-learning app on Food Safety for Mid-day Meals to government partners. The app, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the school cooks and helpers, was greatly appreciated by the Ministry, who agreed to roll out this app across the country.

**Evidence and Results Analysis**

- The report on Food Security and Nutrition in the context of COVID-19 was well received by the Government of Odisha, and they included it in the repository of COVID-19 information management for the state. They also requested WFP to conduct a follow-up assessment of food and livelihood security which will have an additional focus on subsistence farmers, daily wage earners and returnee migrants in rural areas and urban slums.

**NGO Capacity Strengthening**

- As a first step in strengthening the capacity of Civil Society Organisations and national NGOs in food and nutrition security, WFP developed an online capacity needs assessment, in partnership with SPHERE India.

- A proposal for undertaking a study on electronic negotiable warehouse receipt systems as a potential South-South Cooperation exchange was approved under the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)-COVID Opportunity Fund. This exercise will be conducted in India as a field demonstration for learning from neighbouring countries. The Government has agreed to lead a Technical Advisory Committee for this activity.

**Challenges**

Staff continue to work from home and face only minor problems in communications and work-life balance.

**Donors**

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