



WFP COMMON SERVICES BRIEF

COVID-19 RESPONSE | PHASE-OUT STRATEGY

8 OCTOBER 2020



COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on supply chains, leading to a global slowdown, and in some cases shutdown, which has impacted the ability of the health and humanitarian community to mount a global response to the pandemic.

As organizations faced challenges in their attempts to transport cargo and personnel to where they were most needed, WFP stepped up to support the global COVID-19 response, leveraging its supply chain capacity and expertise to provide cargo and passenger transport on behalf of the humanitarian community where commercial options were not available. WFP also worked in conjunction with other UN bodies to support medical evacuations for those staff on the frontlines of the response.

ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

As of 8 October:



76,500 m³ CARGO

dispatched of which **61,700** dispatched via COVID-19 GHRP Free-to-User cargo services



169 countries reached



62 organizations served



24,100 PASSENGERS

transported to



67 destinations

on behalf of



384 organizations



70 MEDEVACS

performed under the COVID-19 Medical Evacuation System **45 carried out by WFP and 25 by UNDOS**

CURRENT OUTLOOK ON SERVICES AND WAY FORWARD

Following a peak in April and May, airfreight rates and capacity stabilized in July as restrictions in certain regions and countries were partially lifted. By August, airfreight rates had further re-adjusted to pre-COVID-19 levels, as a number of commercial carriers slowly resumed passenger and cargo operations.

Six months since the onset of the crisis and the launch of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) WFP is now reviewing with partners the need and demand to continue its COVID-19 free-to-user common services, and defining the phase-out where relevant and viable commercial options exist.

CARGO SERVICES

With over **76,500 m³** of critical cargo now dispatched, WFP has moved roughly 65 percent of the expected total cargo requirements for the global COVID-19 response. The initial barriers to the global response to COVID-19 have now eased thanks to a growing improvement of the commercial airfreight market as well as more available supply of health items, including personal protective equipment. These market improvements, coupled with extensive consultation with partners on pipeline estimates – approximately **41,000 m³** over the next six weeks – and remaining available funding are providing the basis for WFP and partners to now plan the phase out of cargo services.

As part of these phase-out plans, free-to-user cargo movement requests will continue to be accepted through the Emergency Service Marketplace **until 31 October**, with

cargo ready by end of November and WFP foreseeing dispatches being completed by end of 2020. This forecast is based on the current average delivery rate, pace of operations and available funding.

It should be noted that this timeline is subject to change based on factors such as cargo readiness, destination countries and overall operating conditions (including potential resumption of COVID-19 preventive measures restricting commercial operations).

WFP remains committed to supporting the humanitarian community and ensuring that all outstanding cargo movement requests are fulfilled. While international air cargo services across the hub network will be discontinued, existing mandated services will continue as will cost-recovery services provided through WFP Bilateral Service Provision.

GLOBAL PASSENGER SERVICES

As airspace reopens and more commercial airlines resume services, WFP is standing down its Global Passenger Services to destinations where safe and reliable commercial options exist.

As a result, WFP air passenger services have now been discontinued to **38 locations**, which has caused a reduction in the numbers of passengers transported on a weekly basis. However, demand remains high for WFP's passenger services in some regions, with new destinations still being opened in Asia and Latin America. Should the situation evolve, WFP remains ready to reinstate flights

to and from discontinued locations if there is a need and subject to availability of funding.

Based on current availability of commercial options, remaining travel restrictions and the continued spread of the pandemic, WFP foresees that the requirement for its passenger services will continue at least until the end of 2020, especially in hard-to-reach areas. Through monitoring of the commercial sector, WFP together with partners will re-assess the need for services to continue beyond 2020, with implementation contingent on funding availability, commercial gaps and partner demand.

MEDEVAC SERVICES

Medevac services are guided by the UN Medevac Task Force, who therefore are responsible for informing and advising on the timeframe of this service. WFP will continue to support for as long as needed.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In line with a partial recovery in the commercial sector as well as better visibility on COVID-19 response item pipelines allowing for better planning, funding needs have reduced. This has resulted in WFP revising down its budget for the overall COVID-19 Common Services to **US\$ 316 million**.

Demand forecasting based on the epidemiological model towards the beginning of the response initially foresaw a response pipeline consisting of high volumes of personal protective equipment, biomedical items and diagnostics. However, quantities predicted did not materialize and the global response began transitioning towards therapeutics much sooner than expected. As such, the total expected volume required for movement via WFP's free-to-user cargo services is now likely to be close to **100,000 m³** of which **57,700 m³** has already been transported.

WFP is committed to moving all remaining items, and while donors have already generously provided funds to allow WFP to stand up the Common Services, the organization requires a further **US\$ 50 million** to move the last of this cargo and ensure passenger services can go on for as long as they are needed.

As free-to-user service phase-out plans are finalized, communication regarding key dates and procedures will be shared with both service users and the wider humanitarian community, as well as through established coordination mechanisms such as the Logistics Cluster and Hub Working Groups. Regular reporting will also continue, and WFP will ensure that donors are kept informed of the latest developments.

The fluidity of the situation means that WFP will continue to exercise flexibility in its planning and will collaborate with partners to ensure that services are scaled down at the right moment, retaining the ability to resume should the need arise.