



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lesotho Country Brief September 2020



Operational Context

More than half (57 percent) of Lesotho's population live on less than one dollar per day. GDP stands at USD 2.3 billion while its national GDI per capita is USD 1,270 (World Bank). Revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) contributes a significant proportion to Lesotho's national budget. The Government allocates 7 percent of its national budget to social protection programmes such as school meals, pension for the elderly, child grants, and public works.

The population's high vulnerability is exacerbated by recurring climatic hazards, including droughts, early frost, and a low performing economy. Twenty-nine percent of people below the age of 35 are unemployed. The country is also characterized by an extremely high HIV prevalence rate (25.6 percent: 30.4 percent for women and 20.8 for men), with care needed for more than 250,000 orphaned children, most of whom lost their parents to AIDS. Life expectancy stands at 49 years.

Agriculture, which contributes 7 percent of GDP, is a major source of livelihood for 80 percent of the population living in rural areas. WFP supports the Government's efforts in building the resilience of communities frequently affected by climatic hazards, with the view to stimulating agricultural production.

WFP has been present in Lesotho since 1962.



Income Level: **Lower Middle**

2018 Human Development Index: **159 out of 189 countries**

Population: **2.2 million**

Chronic Malnutrition: **33% of children aged 6-59 months**

In Numbers

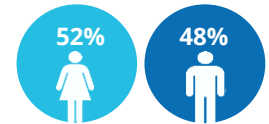
1,786 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lesotho (08 October 2020)

41 deaths

926 recoveries

US\$18.8 million six-month (October 2020 - March 2021) net funding requirements, representing 76 percent of total six-month requirements

428,250 people targeted in 2020



Operational Updates

- On 27 September, Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro announced in his official speech that Lesotho is now in colour purple stage (Clustering Infections Stage), which allows for the partial easing of some restrictions. He also announced the associated regulations on social and economic activities, including opening of schools in line with the Ministry of Education guidelines and tertiary Institutions in accordance with the Risk Mitigation Framework.
- Cash assistance is ongoing in the urban councils of Maseru, Mafeteng, Mochale's Hoek, Quthing and Qacha's Nek districts. A total of 8,041 households (representing 32,164 people) have been assisted to date with LSL 831 (USD 66) per household. A contribution of €2.8 million (equivalent to about M55.5 million) has been received from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). The contribution will be used for the ongoing urban response interventions in the five urban councils of Maseru, Mafeteng, Mochale's Hoek, Quthing and Qacha's Nek districts. The contribution to WFP is part of the joint (FAO, IOM, WFP) €4.4 million (equivalent to about M87.3 million) contribution from ECHO in humanitarian support to alleviate the dire food security impacts of three consecutive years of drought, a situation exacerbated by the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Ms. Mary Thakane Thabaneng after withdrawing her cash at a local retailer.

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Lesotho

Country Strategic Plan (July 2019–June 2024)

| Total Requirements (in USD) | Allocated Contributions (in USD) | Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 111.3 m | 38.6 m | 18.8 m |

Strategic Result 01: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Shock-affected people in Lesotho are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during times of crisis.

Focus Area: Crisis Response

Activities:

- **Activity 1:** Provide cash and/or food transfers to populations affected by shocks.

Strategic Result 02: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable populations in Lesotho benefit from strengthened social protection systems that ensure access to adequate, safe and nutritious food all year round.

Focus Area: Root Causes

Activities:

- **Activity 2:** Support the Government in evidence-based planning, design, management and implementation of gender responsive social protection programmes, including by handing over the home-grown school meals programme.
- **Activity 3:** Strengthen technical capacity of the Government in early warning, food and nutrition security monitoring and vulnerability assessment and analysis through forecast-based financing approaches.

Strategic Result 3: End Malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable populations in Lesotho have improved nutritional status, at each stage of the lifecycle, in line with national targets by 2024.

Focus Area: Root Causes

Activities:

- **Activity 4:** Provide capacity strengthening to the Government and other actors with regard to multi-sectoral coordination, planning, evidence-building and implementation of equitable nutrition policies and programmes.

Strategic Result 4: Sustainable Food Systems

Strategic Outcome 04: Communities in targeted areas, especially women and youth, have resilient, efficient and inclusive food systems by 2024.

Focus Area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- **Activity 5:** Support the design and implementation of assets that are nutritionally relevant to improve and diversify the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and households affected by climate change and land degradation.
- **Activity 6:** Provide technical support to smallholder farmers and other value chain actors, particularly women, in climate-smart agriculture, food quality and safety, marketing of nutritious foods and financial services.

- Crisis response interventions in the rural districts of Mokhotlong and Thaba-tseka are planned to start in mid-October to March 2021 where a hybrid intervention comprised of cash and food voucher to reach 6,000 vulnerable households will be adopted through a network of WFP-contracted retailers. Data

verification and contracting of retailer processes in these two districts have been completed.

- Due to funding constraints, public works activities ended in three southern districts (Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing) and three northern districts (Berea, Maseru and Botha-Bothe). A total of 11,632 people, of which 52 percent are women, was reached in August. Currently, WFP is supporting household-level activities.
- An official launch of the Adaptation Fund Project entitled 'Improving adaptive capacity of vulnerable and food-insecure populations in Lesotho (IACOV)' is planned for 08 October 2020. IACOV is a four-year project (2019-2023) that is supported by the Adaptation Fund, executed by Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) and the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC), while WFP operates as the implementing entity to provide technical backstopping among other key functions to ensure effective implementation of the project.

Monitoring

- According to the newly released Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessment, from October 2020 to March 2021, about 40 percent of Lesotho's population (582,000 people) are projected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3) or higher and will likely face high acute food insecurity. All 10 districts in the country are projected to be in Crisis, with pockets of highly vulnerable populations in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Quthing, Mohale's Hoek and Mafeteng are expected to have populations in Emergency because more than 50 percent of the households in these areas depend on informal labour opportunities in South Africa. Seasonal migration to South African farms (for the harvest) during May/June is a typical livelihood strategy for people in the southern and eastern part of the country (especially Quthing and Qacha's Nek). Movement restrictions have reduced seasonal incomes from 35 percent to 15 percent of the contribution towards household total income.

Challenges

- Under WFP's crisis response, about 264,804 planned beneficiaries, mainly vulnerable men and women, the elderly, HIV-infected and affected including child-headed households, would not be able to receive any support due to funding constraints.

Donors

China, ECHO, Japan, USAID/FFP