The significant increase in COVID-19 infections and the conflict related to Nagorno Karabakh continued to impact WFP’s operations and operational planning throughout October. The country office received surge capacity support from HQ and Cairo Regional Bureau to prepare for an emergency operation accommodating the needs of food insecure households due to COVID-19 and conflict.

In October WFP continued packing and preparing the Take Home Rations (THR) provision to primary school children and kitchen helpers for four WFP supported provinces – Lori, Kotayk, Arzamir and Gagarkunik. THRs are implemented as an alternative modality to school feeding, considering that schools have been closed in response to increasing number of COVID-19 cases. WFP and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) agreed to distribute THR to around 100,000 primary school children across Armenia. Food distributions will be done in November and will be enough for three months period.

WFP, the Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute of Russia (SIFI) and Sustainable School Feeding Foundation (SSFF) conducted the annual needs assessment for renovation of school kitchens and cafeterias in Kotayk region. The mission visited 90 schools of Kotayk region to understand needs and requirements for renovations to prepare schools for the handover of the programme to the Government.

WFP is working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) to launch food assistance to 44,000 food insecure people affected by the pandemic in the regions of Yerevan (22,782) and Kotayk (21,218). The process of identification, verification, and registration of beneficiaries is ongoing with the MLSA. The food assistance will be provided in late November and early December 2020 thanks to WFP corporate internal funding advances.
In October, WFP Armenia continues to promote healthy nutrition and lifestyle among the Armenian population. In October, WFP provided a Nutrition Presentation to the Food Security and Nutrition Technical working group to educate participants on the basic principles and guidelines related to "Nutrition Needs during Emergencies". In Charentsavan, WFP gave a lecture about "Healthy Eating for Children" to inform parents with children from grade 1 to 4 about a healthy balanced diet for their kids.

Amidst the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict WFP Armenia is leveraging on its existing programmes and continues to strengthen the food security of the most vulnerable people currently in Armenia - local population and spontaneous arrivals, and is preparing to scale up its food assistance portfolio.

Monitoring

- In October, WFP worked on Food Value Chain projects monitoring strategy and planning development. M&E activities for Whole Grain Wheat project have been finalized.
- WFP has continued supporting the capacity strengthening of the National Statistical Service (NSS) with particular focus on data management for the Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) 2019.
- M&E unit continued to develop monitoring tools focusing on various distributions, such as: Shock Responsive School Feeding and food allocations for the most vulnerable people affected by COVID-19.

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