



World Food Programme

WFP Cuba Country Brief November 2020

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

Over the last 50 years, Cuba's comprehensive social protection programmes have primarily eradicated poverty and hunger. Although effective, these programmes mostly rely on food imports and strain the national budget. Recurrent natural shocks place further challenges to food security and nutrition.

WFP accompanies the Government on its efforts to develop a new management model to make food-based social protection programmes more efficient and sustainable. WFP supports social safety nets for different vulnerable groups, strengthens agricultural value chains and promotes the improvement of resilience and disaster risk management. These activities contribute to Sustainable Goals 2, 5 and 17.

WFP has been working with Cuba since 1963.



Population: **11.2 million**

2018 Human Development Index:
72 out of **189**

Income Level: **Upper middle**

2017 Gender Inequality Index: **67**
out of **162**

Contact info: wfp.havana@wfp.org

Country Director: Paolo Mattei

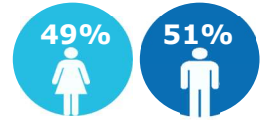
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/cuba

In Numbers

USD 5.7 m total requirements

58.00 mt of food assistance distributed

106,650 people assisted
(October 2020)



Operational Updates

- WFP distributed micronutrient powder (MNP) to children between 6 and 11 months old, and Super Cereal Corn Soya Blend (CSB) to children aged 12-23 months as well as to pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWG) in selected municipalities of the Santiago de Cuba, Granma and Guantanamo provinces. WFP also distributed Super Cereal to elderly people and other vulnerable populations through the community canteens in 22 selected municipalities from the five eastern provinces (Guantanamo, Santiago de Cuba, Holguin, Granma and Las Tunas).

COVID-19 response

- Government authorities reopened the Havana Airport (Aeropuerto Internacional José Martí) while establishing epidemiological surveillance measures, of travellers to avoid the further spread of the pandemic. Despite the efforts made by the authorities; travellers represented 27 percent of Covid-19 confirmed cases in November.

As of November, national authorities reported a total of 8,381 confirmed cases, 7,658 recovered patients and 136 deaths, reaching the second highest number of cases in a month since March 2020. The most affected provinces were Pinar del Río, La Habana, Ciego de Avila, Santiago de Cuba and Sancti Spiritus accounting for 77.8 percent of diagnosed cases.

As part of the UN socio-economic response plan to COVID-19, WFP continued the distribution beans, rice and vegetable oil in the five eastern provinces (mentioned above) through the community canteens.

- WFP is also supporting the local food systems, social protection programmes, school feeding activities, nutrition interventions and logistics operations jointly with FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNICEF and other partners. Joint resource mobilization efforts are ongoing, supported by the Resident Coordinator and the Government.

Interim Country Strategic Plan (2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
7.8 m	14.3 m	3.0 m

Strategic Result 3: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 1: Key food system stakeholders have enhanced capacities to mitigate risks and better support social safety nets by 2021

Focus area: *Root causes*

Activity 1:

- Provide training, equipment and technical assistance to smallholder women and men, including young people, cooperatives, distributors and other stakeholders in agricultural value chains

Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Nutritionally vulnerable groups, including school-age children, have improved nutrition status and more diversified and nutritious diets by 2021

Focus area: *Root causes*

Activity 2:

- Provide unconditional food assistance to shock-affected populations from prepositioned food stocks to ensure swift delivery.

Activity 3:

- Provide food assistance and educational messages to school-age children through the school feeding programme and training and technical assistance to national and local experts and decision makers involved in the programme

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 3: National and local authorities have strengthened capacities to ensure food and nutrition systems' resilience to shocks by 2021

Focus area: *Root causes*

Activity 4:

- Strengthen the capacities of national and local decision makers in disaster and climate risk management, emergency preparedness and response, food security and nutrition analysis and monitoring and information management

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Populations affected by natural hazards maintain access to food during and in the aftermath of a disaster

Focus area: *Crisis response*

Activity 5:

- Provide timely food assistance to shock-affected people using pre-positioned stock, and supply non-food items to support the local food distribution system

Donors:

European Union, ECHO, Government of Cuba, Italy, KOICA and the Russian Federation.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

On 8-9 November, Tropical Storm Eta hit Cuba causing floods, affecting housing, damaging livelihoods endangering rice production of, root vegetables and other crops as well as The most affected provinces were Pinar del Río, Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus and Granma, all of them highly reliant on food production. Government authorities requested the support of WFP to assist through social protection programmes, more than 600,000 vulnerable people from the affected provinces. In response, WFP authorized the distribution of 1,800 mt of propositioned food stocks of rice, beans and vegetable oil for an initial one-month distribution.

Monitoring

- WFP continuously monitors the implementation of programmatic activities, ensuring accountability, transparency and measuring operational performance. Field monitoring officers continue to visit selected institutions along with government counterparts, in order to track WFP's food stocks and distribution to beneficiaries.

Partnerships

WFP initiated strategic discussions with the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office and the Ministry of Domestic Trade to explore opportunities of collaboration on logistics activities. As a result, a more comprehensive support package is envisaged, enabling that information on resource mobilization to support the national logistics system in the next Country Strategic Plan.

Challenges

- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays in the implementation of capacity strengthening activities of the Interim Country Strategic Plan (2020). However, trainings, assessments and meeting formats have been adjusted to be carried out virtually.
- COVID-19 has also affected procurement processes, considering the limited availability of commercial flights to Cuba. Courier air services not being yet available has implied an increase in external transport costs. In addition, the tighter international embargo restrictions have also diffculted payments to international suppliers.
- Although no timeline has been set, the Government has announced the monetary unification which could affect project implementation by triggering an increase in programme costs. WFP will follow the development of government measures in this regard.