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.
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 prepositioned 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 difficulted 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.