Operational Context

Ecuador is an upper-middle-income country; 63 percent of the population lives in urban areas. Income inequality is high (Gini coefficient of 0.48, 2019) and there is a significant rate of chronic malnutrition. Despite the peace process in Colombia, new refugees are still arriving to the country, in addition to an increasing number of vulnerable Venezuelans.

The country is prone to natural hazards, including droughts, floods, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.

Currently, Ecuador is one of the most affected countries by the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and Caribbean.

WFP in Ecuador aims at supporting government policies and priorities, as well as contributing to food sovereignty, food security and nutrition of vulnerable people.

WFP has been present in Ecuador since 1964.

Operational Updates

- WFP’s Country Director, Mario Touchette, participated in the XIX National Round Table of Human Mobility lead by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility and presented the results of the two joint needs assessment concerning the food security and livelihood situation of the Venezuelan population.

  - The Vice President of Ecuador, María Alejandra Muñoz, had a meeting with WFP’s Deputy Executive Director, Amir Abdulla, during her official mission to Europe. During the meeting, they signed a letter of commitment for inter-institutional cooperation that aims at mitigating the damage caused by COVID-19 to the population with high rates of chronic child malnutrition, raising awareness on healthy eating habits, and implementing community canteens.

  - WFP continued to support the government of Brazil with the purchase and delivery of 400 tablets to children who were unable to study during the pandemic as well as delivering 120,000 pairs of latex gloves to the Temporary Care Center of the Municipality of Quito.

  - WFP and the National Service for Emergencies and Risk Management carried out a workshop on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction to develop tools to strengthen emergency preparedness and response in Ecuador.

  - With the support of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador de Esmeraldas, WFP is carrying out the ethnobotanical inventory study to provide valuable information on plants and ecosystem resources that will promote adaptation to climate change focusing on food security.

  - WFP supported the Ecuadorian Red Cross by delivering 4.6 mt of COVID-19 biosafety supplies to 4 provinces.

  - The German Federal Foreign Office increased their support to WFP with USD 1.9 million to improve the food security of vulnerable, migrant and refugee populations.

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12,105 vulnerable Ecuadorian received the Nutritional Support Voucher of USD 240 to alleviate the economic consequences of COVID-19 in 72 prioritized cantons.

70,041 migrants benefited from WFP’s food vouchers in November. The majority were Venezuelans (93 percent), followed by Colombians (6.9 percent).

1,977 people, 47.5 percent from Venezuela, were assisted at shelters and canteens managed by partner organizations.

The one-time food assistance at the border provinces remained suspended.

Monitoring

- WFP continues to provide nutritional follow-up for shelters and canteens. It is also following up on capacity trainings for the cooperating partners, to ensure that trainees have been keeping up with the guidance received on managing healthy and nutritious foods for WFP’s beneficiaries.

- As the COVID-19 pandemic persists, WFP and its cooperating partners continued to assist and monitor the beneficiaries by phone.

- WFP steadily monitors the market and wholesale food prices. In November, the overall price of the basket of goods has slightly increased as well as the price of its food components.

- WFP launched a survey on the effects of COVID-19 on the consumption and purchase of food. WFP is working with the national health authority to complete the technical validation and its subsequent officialization. Results will be used to strengthen public policies on food and diet quality.

Challenges

- The number of COVID-19 cases reached 192,685 as of 30 November.

- According to a WFP’s study, it is estimated that, due to the pandemic, the difficulties to eat adequately will go hand in hand with the increase of extreme poverty, which in Ecuador could go from 7.6 percent in 2019 to 12.7 percent in 2020.

Donors

Canada, Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, United States of America, Private and Multilateral donors.

Additional support has been provided by the Adaptation Fund and UN CERF.