In Numbers

9,804 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lesotho including 210 deaths and 2,888 recoveries (10 February 2021)

US$ 10.8 m six months (February 2021-July 2021) net funding requirements

343,410 People targeted in 2021

Operational Updates

- On 02 February 2021, following the Right Honourable Prime Minister’s speech on COVID-19 mitigation measures, Lesotho moved back to Orange colour coding stage, implying no movements across borders except for essential goods and services.

- All ten districts of Lesotho are currently classified to be in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3 (crisis) or worse, with some 582,000 people in rural areas and a further 184,000 people in urban contexts experiencing acute food insecurity. Food prices remain high while thousands of households and migrant workers have lost their incomes due to loss or reduced job opportunities as a result of COVID-19.

- COVID-19 Response: The urban cash transfer interventions have ended. In efforts to support the most vulnerable people in urban areas who are affected by the impacts of COVID-19, WFP initiated a six-month cash assistance (August 2020-January 2021) to a total of 8,500 households, representing 42,500 people (52 percent female) in the urban councils of Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek, Quthing and Qacha’s Nek districts. Each household received USD 55 (LSL 831) per month.

- Lean Season Response: A total of 6,300 vulnerable households representing 31,500 people (52 percent female) from the rural districts of Mokhotlong and Thaba-tseka are being assisted through commodity vouchers, which are redeemable at local retail shops, and mobile cash transacted through the Vodacom Mpesa platform. Each household receives a monthly entitlement amounting to USD 53 (LSL 811) per household.

- School Feeding: With the closure of schools since March 2020, WFP continues to provide take-home rations of canned fish to a total of 30,473 learners. About 29,527 Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres representing 49 percent of the plan have not received any support since the closure of school in mid-March 2020. With available resources, WFP is looking into how to prioritize the most vulnerable learners from districts with high food insecurity and high malnutrition rate.

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.

Contact: Malehloa Letsie (Malehloa.letsie@wfp.org)
Country Director: Aurore Rusiga
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Lesotho
**WFP Country Strategy**

### Country Strategic Plan (July 2019–June 2024)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirements (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>118.3 m</td>
<td>17.5 m</td>
<td>10.8 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 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 03: 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 04: 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.

**Nutrition:** The implementation of all planned activities is ongoing and these include the following: action plan to operationalize the National Food and Nutrition Strategy; finalization of the advocacy and social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) strategy; dissemination of the approved fortification legislation and regulation; and other climate awareness activities which integrate nutrition, including the establishment of livelihood strengthening initiatives to support people living and affected with HIV and AIDS.

**Resilience:** Due to limited funding, 7,125 of the targeted beneficiaries are without support and will continue facing difficulty in accessing food commodities. About USD 0.5 million, representing six-month requirements, is needed to support them.

### Monitoring

**Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee Food Security Update - January 2021**

- All the 10 districts remain in IPC Phase 3 (crisis) or worse until March 2021.
- Many households, especially in urban areas, continue to lose incomes during total lockdown.
- There were good rains between October and December which were conducive for agricultural activities. Planting started on time due to timely onset of the rains countrywide.
- Normal rainfall conditions are expected in January to March 2021.
- Casual labour opportunities improved as agricultural activities took place in rural areas.
- Food prices remain high, yet purchasing power is low for at least 40 percent of the population.
- Prices of staple were higher than the previous year and five-year average.
- Majority of households had depleted their food stocks, and food was mostly obtained through purchases.

### Donors

Canada, China, ECHO, Japan, USAID/FFP