Operational Context

Kenya, a lower-middle-income economy is transforming rapidly. However, social and economic inequalities persist and more than one third of Kenyans live below the poverty line. Agriculture remains the main economic driver, although 80 percent of the land is either arid or semi-arid. Rapid population growth, climate change, stagnating agricultural production, gender inequalities and underperforming food systems are the most significant challenges to food and nutrition security.

The most severe living conditions exist in the arid north, which is underdeveloped, drought prone and affected by frequent tribal conflicts. The prevalence of wasting among children aged 6-59 months often exceeds the “critical” threshold of 15 percent. Stunting is above 25 percent in some counties. Net enrolment in primary education in the arid counties is still below 50 percent.

Opportunities to address these challenges include increased government investments in agriculture and in the social sectors, the devolution of service delivery to counties, use of technologies and innovation and an inclusive and equitable policy base.

Kenya hosts a large population of refugees, mainly in camps located in Garissa and Turkana counties. Unable to work or move freely, refugees are highly dependent on international assistance.

Food Security Situation

Food Security Outlook

According to FEWSNET’s December update, poor urban households will continue to experience challenges through December and January, due to low labour demand and below-average income-earning opportunities. Poor urban households are likely to continue to employ coping strategies indicative of IPC Phase 2 (“Stressed” level of acute food insecurity) such as borrowing cash from relatives, purchasing food on credit and reliance on formal and informal credit facilities, and IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) such as selling of productive assets such as bicycles and sewing machines. A smaller proportion of households are likely to continue engaging in coping strategies indicative of IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), such as illegal activities.

Desert Locust

Immature locust swarms continue to arrive and spread throughout the northern part of Kenya and were sighted in Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit and Wajir. Breeding continues, and hopper bands are present in the southeast near Taita Taveta and along the coast. There is a moderate risk that a few swarms could reach central Kenya, as soil conditions are dry in some of the areas where the locusts are arriving. The surge in desert locusts threatens grazing and browsing conditions in pastoral areas and are likely to negatively impact Kenya’s short rain season harvests in February. WFP in collaboration with the County Governments of Samburu, Garissa, Tana River, Isiolo and Turkana and FAO are monitoring the situation, carrying out climate-proofing and adaptation activities to ensure potentially affected communities recover quickly from the impact of the locust infestation.

Operational Updates

COVID-19 Urban Response

WFP provides assistance through cash-based transfers (CBT) and nutrition support to urban populations in Nairobi (282,000 persons) and Mombasa (96,000 persons) Counties in addition to the Government’s response to COVID-19. WFP is developing an urban strategy, drawing on the successful urban response, and leveraging WFP’s expertise to address the gaps in support to the urban populations.

Integrating Gender and Food Systems

WFP launched the Gender Action Learning Methodology (GALS): a gender transformative approach that WFP intends to roll out as a complementary and integrated component of the Sustainable Food Systems Programme in arid and semi-arid countries. The pilot phase will cover Makueni, Kitui and Taita Taveta Counties, targeting smallholder farmers, to participate in crop insurance programme and Village Savings and Loans Associations. The approach aims to tackle
Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Refugees and asylum seekers living in camps and settlements and populations affected by natural and human-caused disasters have access to adequate food to meet their food and nutrition needs throughout the year.

Focus area: Strategic outcome 1 focuses on crisis response, is aligned with WFP Strategic Result 7 – “Everyone has access to food” – and SDG target 2.1 and contributes to SDGs 1 and 3.

Activities:
Activity 1: Provide food assistance and nutrient-rich commodities to refugees, along with Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC), and support for self-reliance activities in camps and settlement areas. Activity 2: Provide food assistance and nutrient-rich commodities – complemented by SBCC – to vulnerable Kenyan populations in order to meet acute food needs.

Strategic Result 2: Targeted smallholder producers and food-insecure, vulnerable populations benefit from more inclusive, sustainable food systems and increased resilience to climate shocks enabling them to meet their food and nutrition needs by 2023.

Focus area: Strategic outcome 2 focuses on resilience, is aligned with WFP Strategic Result 4 and SDG target 2.4 and contributes to the achievement of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 10.

Activities:
Activity 3: Create assets and transfer knowledge, skills and climate risk management tools to food-insecure households. Activity 4: Facilitate access to markets and provide technical expertise in supply chain management to smallholder farmers and retailers.

Strategic Result 3: National and county institutions in Kenya have strengthened capacity and systems to assist food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations by 2023.

Focus area: Strategic outcome 3 focuses on root causes, is aligned with WFP Strategic Result 5 – “Capacity strengthening” – and SDG target 17.9 and contributes to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10.

Activities:
Activity 5: Engage in strengthening the capacities of national and county institutions in the areas of disaster risk management, food assistance programmes, nutrition services and social safety nets.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs.

Strategic Result 6: Gender, social, economic and political inequalities through a community-led empowerment methodology involving men, women and the youth, increasing ownership and leadership for enhanced sustainable livelihoods and resilience.

Sustainable Environmental Solutions

WFP has been implementing solutions to reduce energy consumption and increase the use of renewables in the Kenya country programme. In 2020, as part of the Energy Efficiency Programme, a 14 kWp solar system with a 37-kWh storage capacity was installed at the Kakuma distribution point to provide power for the general food distributions and for the compound’s security lighting. In addition, three solar-powered illuminated billboards, broadcasting sensitization messages on nutrition practices, were erected at various market centres in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, providing light and thus facilitating economic activities.

Monitoring

- In December 2020, WFP’s complaints and feedback mechanism received 1,424 feedbacks from beneficiaries, traders and the public. Fifty-three percent of the feedbacks were received from women, 50 percent came from beneficiaries benefiting from relief assistance, 38 percent from refugees and 26 percent from beneficiaries benefiting from improvement of livelihood and resilience activities. Eighty-four percent of all feedbacks were successfully addressed.
- A joint market monitoring led by REACH and WFP, together with the County Government, was conducted remotely in Mombasa. Food supply and general trade flows remained stable in December, with prices of cereals, pulses, processed commodities and fresh products experiencing minimal fluctuations.