Operational Context

Tajikistan is a landlocked, low-income and food-deficit country. The mountainous landscape confines arable land to just seven percent of the country’s surface and poses enormous food security challenges during the winter period. The country is the poorest in the Commonwealth of Independent States, with 27.4 percent of the population living in poverty and 11.8 percent living in extreme poverty (Tajikistan Agency of Statistics).

In Tajikistan, despite significant improvements in recent years, malnutrition rates remain high. WFP is contributing to the Government’s progress on SDG 2, by providing access to appropriate nutritional support and health care, promoting school feeding, building resilience to the impacts of climate change, and ensuring preparedness for recurring natural disasters.

The Government has identified food security and access to quality nutrition as one of its development priorities.

WFP has been present in Tajikistan since 1993. WFP currently operates under the Country’s Strategic Plan (CSP) that was launched in July 2019.

Operational Updates

- In February, WFP distributed food assistance, comprising fortified wheat flour and vegetable oil, to almost 20,000 vulnerable families of schoolchildren in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous (GBAO), Khatlon, Sughd regions, the districts of Rasht Valley and Roghun town. The assistance has been made possible thanks to the additional contribution from the Russian Federation, which enabled WFP to purchase 1,200 mt of wheat flour and 50 mt of vegetable oil, enough to meet the food needs of vulnerable families for one month. The take-home ration distribution supported the families in alleviating lean season food shortages that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- In February, WFP delivered equipment to eight bakeries being constructed or renovated within the WFP School Feeding Programme in partnership with the Russian Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute (SIFI), a local non-governmental organization and the private sector. This activity is implemented with financial support from the Russian Federation. The purpose of the bakeries is to ensure a steady supply of fresh and quality bread on a daily basis for more than 110,000 primary schoolchildren in more than 300 schools. Bakeries staff will be trained on the use on new equipment. The bakeries are expected to generate local job opportunities, which is particularly important given Tajikistan’s current socio-economic challenges.

- WFP continues supporting the implementation of income-generating activities in more than 70 schools in Sughd Region and the districts of Rasht Valley. Activities such as greenhouses, beekeeping, animal breeding, fishponds, canning and sewing workshops will be implemented through the technical support of local NGOs. The activities will enable schools to generate income, which will contribute to the provision of improved and more nutritious school meals, while reducing the burden for parents to contribute.

Photo caption: Take-home rations distribution in Devashtich District, Sughd Region. ©WFP/Timur Zakirov
WFP continued implementing food assistance for assets projects in four districts of GBAO (Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region) and the districts of Rasht Valley to support vulnerable households to cope with the socio-economic shocks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily due to increasing food costs and reducing remittances from labour migrants. Through this initiative, WFP will assist 34,000 beneficiaries. During February, more than 5,800 beneficiaries were reached through this intervention.

Challenges
- WFP has 87 mt of food commodities allocated for emergency response as a preparedness measure, which can support 3,600 people over a period of two months. WFP requires more funding to increase and diversify its preparedness efforts.
- The existing USAID grant for activities related to the treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) is expiring by mid-June 2021. WFP continues to seek additional resources to continue with the implementation beyond June 2021.

Monitoring
- During the reporting period, 235 sites were physically monitored.

Resourcing
- Considering COVID-19 related needs, the total net funding requirements for the period March-August 2021 stand at USD 2.1 million.

Donors
Russian Federation, USA, Green Climate Fund, Swiss Cooperation Office and Private Donors (Japan Association for WFP).