Operational Context

Efforts to reach a peaceful conclusion to the conflict continue amid persisting political instability and a volatile security situation. Unrest since 2011 has caused the socioeconomic, humanitarian and protection situation in the country to deteriorate significantly. Ongoing armed conflict further aggravates the unstable environment, with political rivalries and violent struggles enduring to the present day. The effects of the coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions implemented to prevent its spread have also had far-reaching repercussions.

WFP assists food-insecure and vulnerable people in Libya, including crisis-affected internally displaced persons, returnees, non-displaced populations, refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants living in urban settings. The operation works under an Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP), which helps WFP and its partners to work with the Libyan people to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The ICSP includes general and emergency food assistance as well as the implementation of complementary programmes such as school feeding and food assistance for training activities to build resilience and empower youth and women. WFP is increasingly engaging across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to support the review and rehabilitation of pre-crisis social protection systems.

In Libya, WFP co-leads the Food Security Sector and leads the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Sectors. It also manages the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) and the UN Hub in Benghazi.

Operational Updates

- In February, WFP reached over 92,000 people in need through its programmes in Libya, which include general and emergency food distributions, provision of commodity e-vouchers, food assistance for training activities and a school feeding/healthy kitchen project.

- Close to 10,000 beneficiaries in Tripoli and Zwara received commodity vouchers for redemption of food assistance at local stores in February. These SMS-based e-vouchers have the triple benefit of restoring dignity to beneficiaries, stimulating the economy and helping strengthen the technological capacity of local partners. WFP is working to expand its use of vouchers in 2021 to more beneficiaries in urban areas where the impact on markets is positive.

- Under a new project partnership agreement for 2021, WFP and UNHCR are extending their support to food insecure refugees and asylum-seekers in Libya in response to the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the effects of the ongoing conflict. UNHCR and WFP jointly resumed distributions of ready-to-eat rations in February, reaching over 7,000 vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers. Staff and partners will continue to ensure COVID-19 precautionary measures, such as personal protection equipment, social distancing and disinfection, are in place for distributions.

- WFP received an award of USD 120,000 from the World Bank for a joint social protection assessment in 2021, in support of strengthening social protection measures in Libya that protect access to adequate, nutritious and safe food for all.

- Over 400 farmers and agricultural experts are participating in the WFP-facilitated Agriculture Information Network for the Fezzan region. Topics discussed include the impact of climate change on the weather, with dry cold winters and the lack of rain pushing more farmers to use greenhouses or other covers.

Photo: Luggage is unloaded from the UNHAS aircraft after it touches down in Tripoli carrying humanitarian and development actors. © WFP
Some 75 women are participating in EU-fund Day Centre in a town.

In February, WFP reached out to 100 percent of its local partners, conducting market monitoring by collecting the prices of 32 items from 20 cities in the West and South. February findings, featured in the REACH Joint Market Monitoring Initiative report, show that the cost of the February Minimum Expenditure Basket is 18.1 percent higher than pre-COVID-19 levels in March 2020.

As part of its quality control monitoring, WFP reached out to 300 randomly selected beneficiaries of in-kind and e-voucher assistance in seven cities to receive their feedback via phone interviews. Analysis of the February findings is ongoing, while analysis of the January findings indicate that 100 percent of interviewed beneficiaries confirmed their receipt of assistance, and no interviewed beneficiaries faced security issues in reaching redemption points.

In February, WFP’s third-party monitoring partner conducted 86 onsite visits to monitor food distributions across 33 different points in the West, East and South of the country.

### Gender

Food assistance for training activities for 2021 began in February in Ajdabiya under a project sponsored by UN Women. Some 75 women are participating in vocational training courses in February, with another group of 125 women anticipated to start in March, making a total of 200 participants by the end of the training cycle in April 2021.

### Common Services

In February, UNHAS performed weekly flights connecting the East and the West of the country - going from Tunis to Tripoli and Benghazi and back - providing vital access for 185 passengers from 31 different organizations. Access was also reopened to Misrata, with flights tentatively scheduled twice a month. However, without further funding, UNHAS will be forced to cease its provision of crucial air access to Libya by the end of March.

The Emergency Telecommunications Sector’s inter-agency common feedback mechanism (CFM) received over 2,100 calls in January from people requesting information or assistance. The majority of calls (91 percent) were related to humanitarian services. The CFM is also being used as a national COVID-19 informational hotline; the remaining 9 percent of calls were related to COVID-19. Operators continue to share official health guidelines and refer suspected COVID-19 cases to the National Centre for Disease Control.

ETS internet connectivity services are also being provided at UNHCR’s Community Day Centre in Tripoli to help persons of concern communicate with their communities and loved ones; a total of 34 people used the service in February 2021.

### Challenges

As a result of insecurity and the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, humanitarian organizations including WFP are receiving a high number of requests for food assistance from national and local authorities across Libya. WFP urgently requires USD 8.9 million to sustain operations through August 2021, in order to respond to rising needs and ensure that this health crisis does not also become a food crisis.

### Donors (in alphabetical order)

CERF, Czech Republic, EU Humanitarian Aid, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, WFP Multilateral Donors, WFP Private Sector Partners, World Bank