WFP Kenya Country Brief
March 2021

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 socio-economic impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation by affecting the poor households, especially in urban areas.

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.

In Numbers

5,094 mt of food commodities distributed

US $ 4.9 m cash-based transfers made

US $ 162 m six months (April–September 2021) net funding requirements

880,845 people assisted in March 2021

Food Security Situation

Food Security Outlook

According to FEWSNET, the onset of the March to May long rains is delayed and below average across the country. Water resources and pasture are almost depleted in the pastoral areas, forcing people to walk longer distances in search of water. The situation in the urban areas remains of concern as poor households face reduced income and purchasing power. WFP continues to monitor the situation in collaboration with partners and the Government at national and county levels.

Desert Locust Invasion

According to FAO, desert locust swarms were spotted in Nyandarua, Nakuru and Baringo Counties in March 2020. However, due to delayed onset of the rain, maturation and breeding is limited. The ongoing control operations have resulted in a decline of swarms and it is anticipated that the invasion will be minimal this year compared to last year. WFP has been supporting the locust response by providing logistics services by transporting insecticides to various locations and coordination support at the county level.

COVID-19

On 26 March 2020, the Government of Kenya imposed a cessation of movement and suspension of gatherings and in-person meetings in Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Machakos and Nakuru Counties to reduce the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Additionally, all physical learning was suspended across the country. In addition, the Government augmented mass vaccination for the Kenyan population, specifically for frontline workers and vulnerable groups.

WFP continues to support the most affected through its urban response in Nairobi and Mombasa Counties, targeting 378,000 people with cash-based transfers and nutrition support. WFP is developing an urban strategy in order to transition the response into a longer-term support for the urban population.

WFP is also providing food assistance to people in the isolation centres situated in the refugee camps and settlements.
**Operational Updates**

**Launch of Kakuma Biashara Centre**

The Turkana Governor and UNHCR launched the *Biashara* centre as a one-stop centre for provision of Business Development Service to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises owned by refugees and host communities in Turkana West and other parts of the County. The centre will be used as an incubation site for start-ups and small and medium scale businesses within the WFP markets activities targeted at refugees and host communities. WFP will use its expertise in food and nutrition security, supply chain management and food markets (retail engagement) to contribute to self-reliance and integration of refugees and host communities.

**Food Assistance**

WFP is providing food assistance to over 400,000 refugees and 380,000 Kenyans living in arid areas. In March, WFP distributed over 5,000 mt of food and US$ 2.3 million through cash-based transfers to enable vulnerable families to meet their daily food needs.

**Expanding the Sesame Value Chain**

WFP trained 100 farmers (44 percent female) in Buna and Habaswein sub counties of Wajir County in collaboration with several County Agricultural Officers. The training aimed at strengthening capacity of farmers on production, marketing, and extraction of oil from sesame seeds. WFP will provide two sesame oil extraction machines to enhance value addition.

**Support to the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSMP)**

In 2019, at the Government's request, WFP together with the Ministry of Education carried out an assessment of the supply chain systems for the Home-Grown School Meals Programme (HGSMP). Since then, WFP has supported the implementations of the recommendations of the assessment in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the HGSMP. In March the Ministry of Education and WFP supply chain team jointly monitored the Government-led school feeding distributions. to establish supply chain areas that still require improvement within the HGSMP.

**Monitoring**

WFP’s beneficiary outreach and engagement strategy aims to harmonize engagement with communities, improve ownership of projects and create strong social connections in its areas of operation. In March 2021, WFP’s complaints and feedback mechanism received 1,967 cases from beneficiaries, traders, partners, and the public. Of these, 53 percent were from women and three percent from people living with disabilities. Eighty three percent of cases were resolved by the end of the month. WFP is working with service providers and the local community to resolve the pending cases.

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