In May 2021, WFP assisted 516,855 beneficiaries with in-kind food assistance and 213,115 beneficiaries through cash transfer in the 9 drought-affected southern Madagascar districts. Despite significant logistics constraints, WFP has completed four out of the five monthly in-kind food distributions initially planned for the January-May period. WFP is starting a new cycle of distributions in early June.

For the June-August 2021 period, WFP plans to reach 674,000 people with both in-kind and cash-based transfer (CBT) modalities, coupled with prevention of malnutrition. 14,000 people in IPC 5 will be provided with a full 30-day ration, while a half ration (15 days) will be distributed to those in IPC 3 and 4.

WFP urgently requires USD 78.6 million to sustain the emergency through the next lean season (September 2021 – March 2022) by providing full rations to 674,000 people in IPC 3-5.

Key Highlights
To improve its response, deploy staff, and allocate additional resources to the crisis, WFP’s operation in Madagascar was internally classified as a Level 2 emergency.

Results of UNICEF’s global acute malnutrition (GAM) assessment for the first trimester of 2021 show that global acute malnutrition rates have risen sharply. All the districts of the Androy Region (Ambombe, Bekily, Beloha and Tshombo) are heavily affected by acute malnutrition and are classified as a nutritional emergency with a GAM rate of 16.1% for the entire region, with some communes reaching 27%. The number of communes in nutrition emergency has increased from 36 in December 2020 to 97 in April 2021. According to the Ministry of Health of Madagascar, new admissions for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in the 10 most affected districts have increased by 102% over the past trimester, growing from 3,441 in December 2020 to 6,974 in February 2021.

The recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) conducted in April 2021 reveals a dramatic situation: 1.14 million people need urgent assistance (IPC Phase 3 or above), of which 14,000 are critically food insecure (Catastrophe or IPC Phase 5). The situation is expected to continue deteriorating from October to December 2021, bringing the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above to 1.31 million and the population in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) likely to double to 28,000 people.

Operational Updates
Drought Situation
Madagascar continues to face the most severe drought since 1981, affecting most of the areas in the south, including Atsimo Andrefana region, the breadbasket of the Grand Sud, leading to a severe humanitarian crisis.

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis shows that 1.14 million people need urgent assistance (IPC Phase 3 or above). Ambosary Atsimo is the most affected district, classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), 75 percent of its population is in IPC Phase 3 or above, and nearly 14,000 people are in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). This is the first time that people have been recorded in IPC Phase 5 since the methodology was introduced in Madagascar in 2016. With insufficient food stocks, high prices of staples due to COVID-19 and related restrictions and poor employment opportunities, the situation is expected to continue deteriorating from October to December 2021, bringing the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above to 1.31 million. The population in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) will likely double, and the number of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) or worse, will likely exceed 510,000.

Moreover, chances to see a significant improvement in access to food in the coming months are rather low. The latest WFP rapid assessment of the agricultural season and household food security indicates that agricultural production is less than 40% of the five-year average in all areas (especially in Ambosary, Ampanany and Ambovombe). Locust invasions and devastation of harvest (especially maize) by army caterpillars are observed in both the Androy and the Anoye regions. Additionally, low availability and increased prices of seeds observed in both regions prevent many peasants from sowing.
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (July 2019 – June 2024)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Net Funding Requirements (in USD) for the next lean season (Sept 2021 – March 2022)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>297.4 million</td>
<td>66 million</td>
<td>78.6 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs before, during and after crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:
- General food distribution and early recovery
- Prevention of acute malnutrition
- Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition
- Nutritional support to tuberculosis patients

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Primary schoolchildren in targeted areas have access to adequate, healthy and nutritious food as part of a government-led social protection strategy

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:
- School canteens
- Home grown school feeding

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Nutritionally vulnerable populations in areas with consistently high rates of undernutrition have improved nutritional status.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:
- Chronic malnutrition prevention
- Food fortification
- Social Behavior Change Communication

Strategic Result 3: Sustainable food systems

Strategic Outcome 4: Women and men smallholder producers in targeted communities facing climate shocks increase their access to profitable markets and establish more inclusive, efficient and resilient food systems all year round.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:
- Local purchase to smallholder farmers organizations
- Food assistance for assets creation
- Disasters and crisis prevention and management

Strategic Result 4: Enhance global partnerships

Strategic Outcome 5: Government and humanitarian partners in Madagascar are supported by effective emergency preparedness and response arrangements before, during and after crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:
- Support for assessment, analysis and emergency preparedness and response
- Shared logistics services and platforms
- Shared emergency telecommunications services and platforms

Donors

European Union (ECHO), France, Germany, Republic of Korea (KOICA), Lichtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, UBRAF, UN Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), UNICEF, UN Peace Building Fund (PBF), USAID (Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance), WFP Japan, WPD Share the Meal App.

WFP Madagascar Country Brief

May 2021

Photo: General Food Distribution in Ifotaka, the epicentre of the food crisis in southern Madagascar. WFP/Tsiory Andriantsaona

WFP Country Strategy

A continuous increase in the prices of certain basic foods coupled with a marked decrease in availability on the markets was reported in most districts. In Betio, for example, the price of rice has increased from 700 to 850 Ar per cup, cassava - from 1,500 to 2,000 Ar per cup, and maize - from 2,000 to 2,400 Ar per kg.

Drought Response

In May, WFP reached 516,855 beneficiaries with in-kind food assistance. WFP’s cash-based assistance reached 213,115 beneficiaries, implementing the cash distribution plan at almost 100%. In Bekily, dahalo (cattle raiders) attacks in the fokontanies (villages) of WFP interventions pose security risks to beneficiaries and WFP operations, not allowing the establishment of multiple distribution points closer to fokontanies. Transfer sites are therefore concentrated in the administrative centres of the communes.

With the available resources, WFP aims to continue its assistance beyond the lean season and reach almost 214,000 people with cash and 460,000 people with in-kind assistance in June-August 2021.

Internal and International Humanitarian Flights

WFP has launched a call for contributions to support the establishment of both internal flights to the Grand Sud to be operated by the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) as well as international flights between Johannesburg and Antananarivo.

COVID-19 Response

To date, WHO has registered 41,933 COVID-19 cases and 887 deaths in Madagascar. Although the state of sanitary emergency is still in place, a number of restrictions have been lifted: internal borders have been reopened and internal flights re-established, weekend confinement in the capital Antananarivo has been cancelled and curfew pushed to 23.00. Nevertheless, all international commercial flights remain suspended.

WFP Regular Programmes

School feeding programme:

In collaboration with the Ministry of National Education, WFP plans to provide school meals to 228,500 school children during the current trimester. Although not yet available, WFP expects that the number of children served in May will slightly exceed the planned target. This expected increase is mainly driven by (i) the recent Government decision to remove enrolment fees and (ii) by the migration of families caused by the deteriorating food insecurity situation which results in an influx of children in schools providing school meals.

Nutrition:

COVID-19-induced restrictions continue to disrupt the implementation of regular nutrition activities which are also affected by the priority put on life-saving activities in response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the south. WFP is actively engaged in the preparation of the next Food Systems Summit, including through its participation in the dedicated task force.

Resilience:

As part of the Forecast-based Financing project (FbF), staff of the Directorate General of Meteorology was trained on seasonal forecasts by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI). The training focused on building participants’ capacities to integrate forecasts into the FbF decision-making approach and supporting early warning systems in the four regions of the FbF project.

Under the microinsurance scheme recently introduced in the Ambovombe and Ambosaary districts by WFP and its partners, a payout of USD 350,000 was triggered for enrolled households at the end of the 2020 lean season. The compensation was activated after most households experienced a full loss of their maize as a result of adverse climatic conditions.

Funding Challenges

WFP is facing serious funding shortfalls that can hinder its ability to assist crisis-affected people. Additional funding is crucial for WFP to be able to continue its assistance beyond May in order to meet the growing needs as the drought persists and to avert the approaching famine. Additional contributions for international flights are also needed in order to provide the humanitarian community with regular flights from Johannesburg and ensure continuity of this service at least until the end of the next lean season (March 2022).

WFP requires USD 78.6 million to sustain the emergency response (including general food distributions, prevention of acute malnutrition, and moderate acute malnutrition, MAM, treatment) during the next lean season (September 2021 – March 2022).