DRC is one of the world's most fertile countries, yet severe food insecurity and acute malnutrition are rampant. One major reason: armed conflict, especially in the East, preventing farmers from accessing their fields.

Toddler Kambale cries as his arm is measured at a WFP health centre in Beni, in DRC's restive Nord Kivu province. But his eyes light up when he is offered a sachet of nutritious peanut paste, used as a supplementary food to prevent malnutrition. “My son really loves this stuff,” says mom Maguy, who volunteers at the centre as a community outreach worker. “Every month they give us a box of it and he won’t let his brothers and sisters anywhere near it.”

More than just a treat, the peanut paste is making a difference for Kambale and tens of thousands of other malnourished children in the country receiving WFP nutritional support. “He's doing much better now since we started this programme,” Maguy says, “and his weight seems to be on the right track.” For many children like Kambale, malnutrition is one fallout of years of conflict and other misfortunes that have displaced millions in the country, including his family.

Things were better when mother Maguy and her husband—both rural development graduates from a technical institute—first married. They invested in an agricultural project, cultivating cassava, rice and beans, and selling their surplus. “We had the technical expertise and a clear vision of what we wanted to achieve,” Maguy recalls. Then brutal militia attacks began, most targeting civilians, she says—attacks that continue today. The family did not give up. They moved to an area considered safer, and began farming again. Then came the Ebola virus, restricting their movements. “We still managed to continue farming and harvested some crops,” Maguy says. “But for the past eight months we have been unable to get to our fields because that area is also full of armed groups.” The family's hopes for the future are now fading. "But at least with the nutrition assistance, I am less worried about my son's development," Maguy says. "I don't know what tomorrow may bring, but for now, I'm glad that my boy is receiving the nutritious food he needs." Malnutrition prevention and treatment projects such as these are essential, offer hope to mother's like Maguy for a healthy future for their children and have been proven to be good value for donor investment.

IN DRC’S RESTIVE EAST, A MOTHER FIGHTS FOR HER CHILDREN’S HEALTH
Strategic outcome 1: Targeted food insecure populations affected by shocks in DRC are able to meet their basic food requirements in times of crisis

- 5.3 million people reached through food and cash assistance
- 150,000 school children received hot, nutritious meals and take-home rations

Strategic outcome 2: Food insecure and vulnerable populations in conflict and shock-affected areas have improved nutritional status in line with national protocols by 2021

- 844,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women were treated under the moderate acute malnutrition treatment programme
- WFP contributed to reducing chronic malnutrition in 6,900 children and pregnant and breastfeeding women
- 651,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls received special nutritious food

Strategic outcome 3: Smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities in targeted and crisis-prone areas, especially in eastern DRC, enhance their productive livelihoods and improve their food security and resilience by 2021

- 517,000 people benefitted from WFP’s resilience programmes
- 320 mt of seeds were distributed to farmers
- WFP purchased 451 mt of food from cooperatives for its Home Grown Schoolfeeding Programme
- 320 mt of seeds were distributed to farmers

Strategic outcome 4: National institutions in the DRC have strengthened capacity to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition and respond to shocks by 2021

- 12 market bulletins produced with the national cell for Analysis of Development Indicators
- 15 emergency food security assessments conducted
- WFP purchased 451 mt of food from cooperatives for its Home Grown Schoolfeeding Programme

Strategic outcome 5: The humanitarian community in the DRC have the capacity to effectively respond to shocks through strategic partnership by 2021

- Logistics Cluster rehabilitated 4,700 kms of road and 15 bridges
- 4290 m3 of COVID-19 related items were stored for partners
- UNHAS transported 45,000 passengers and 746 tons of light cargo

PARTNERS
Canada, Germany, Italy, Food and Agriculture Organization, DRC Ministry of Health, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UNICEF, World Bank

Picture (c) WFP/Ben Anguandia