WFP Burundi
Country Brief
September 2021

Operational Context

According to April 2021 (lean season) IPC results, 14 percent of the population (1.61 million) is facing emergency and crisis levels of food insecurity (phases 3 and 4). The food security situation could improve in the coming months, thanks to the harvest of the 2021B season. For the projected period (June to September 2021), the number of people in need could decrease to about 1.04 million people (9%). However, food security situation will remain worse in livelihood zones of “Depression du Nord, Crete Congo Nil and Plaine de l’Imbo”. Factors, such as rainfall deficit, rising waters of Lake Tanganyika, floods, population displacement in the western provinces, consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and recurrent population movements are aggravating the food insecurity in the country: staple food prices have soared highest in the past five years.

Over 90 percent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Burundi’s preparedness for emergencies and crises is weak and cannot cope with severe shocks such as droughts, epidemics and floods, which often claim lives and undermine livelihoods. Burundi is the second country most affected by chronic malnutrition in the world. According to the SMART 2020, the national average stunting rate is at 52 percent well above the emergency threshold (40 percent). WFP has been present in Burundi since 1968.

In Numbers

- **630 mt** of food assistance distributed
- **USD 1,688,553** cash-based transfer under assistance to refugees, returnees, people affected by the rising waters of Lake Tanganyika and under resilience-building activities
- **USD 10.7 m** net funding requirements for the next six months (October 2021 - March 2022)
- **213,496 people** assisted in September 2021

Operational Updates

**Assistance to refugees:** WFP provided food and nutritional assistance to **51,042** refugees (22,458 males, 28,584 females, 13,781 children aged 0-59 months and 2,042 people aged over 60 years) with the distribution of **295 mt** of in-kind food and **348,563** in cash-based transfers (CBT). In-kind food consisted of a full ration of pulses, vegetable oil and salt, and a partial ration of pulses (80 gr/pers instead of 120 gr). The CBT was distributed to enable beneficiaries to purchase cereals, which is lacking in the food basket, due to unavailability.

**Assistance to returnees:** WFP provided food and nutritional assistance to **3,786** Burundian returnees (1,855 males or 49 percent and 1,931 females or 51 percent), distributing **132 mt** of in-kind food and **USD 117,297 through CBT**. The in-kind assistance consisted of hot meals provided at transit centres, and a three-month return package consisting of cereals and vegetable oil. The CBT was provided to allow returnees to buy beans and salt, not provided in the food basket.

**Assistance to IDPs affected by the rising waters of Lake Tanganyika:** A total of **24,485** internally displaced people (IDPs) in Bujumbura, Makamba and Rumonge Provinces received CBTs amounting to **USD 993,635**, to help them purchase food to meet their daily food needs for a month.

**Resilience:** In September, WFP initiated the third phase of its Germany’s BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) funded resilience-building activities in Gitega and Karusi. Due to the COVID-19, this phase majorly focuses on household-specific activities, the creation of regulated community asset, and capacity strengthening of technical staff from WFP, the Government and partner. In collaboration with the cooperation partner World Vision, WFP supported beneficiary households to develop their specific development plans, including the identification of assets to be created, and an income-generating activity to be implemented. The project targets 5,127 households who had achieved good results in the second phase. In September, these participants (**25,635 beneficiaries**) received **USD 229,058** through CBT. The cash distribution was coupled with sensitization messages to provide the tools for the households to make decision making on nutritious diets and micro investments, including within the village savings and loan associations that influence local economies.
Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM): In September, MAM treatment activities benefited 7,665 moderately malnourished pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWGs) and 9,375 children aged 6-59 months who received 130 mt of specialized nutritious foods in Canku zo, Kirundo, Ngozi, and Rutana Provinces. Distributions were coupled with social behaviour change communication (SBCC) implemented by health community workers and targeting the PLWGs, and guardians present at the health centers for distributions.

Stunting prevention: WFP provided 44 mt of specialized nutritious food to 42,965 children age 6-23 months in Kirundo Province. Activities included a strong SBCC component targeting the community in general.

School Feeding Programme: The programme assisted 48,543 school children with 29 mt of food (including 18 mt of milk) in Ngozi and Kirundo Provinces. So far, few schoolchildren were reached due to reopening of schools in mid-September and the unavailability of some food commodities.

Russia contributes to school feeding: Russia donated 1,484 mt of wheat flour equivalent to USD 2 million. This contribution is crucial for the continuation of the school feeding programme in Burundi. The first consignment of 299 mt arrived in Burundi on 6 September and the commodities will be distributed in October.

Monitoring

In September, WFP and its partners received 327 feedback and complaints from beneficiaries through the complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM). Out of these, 272 (83 percent) were resolved, and 55 are currently being addressed. The main complaints included assistance request. In terms of priority, 67 complaints were classified high priority. They included suspicions of fraud, beneficiaries who are not in distribution lists, food quality and surge in maize meal (MML) price while refugees had received cash to purchase cereals.

Challenges

The food assistance and MAM treatment activity provided to refugees continue to face shortages due to funding constraints. WFP was not able to provide any SuperCereal Plus in 2021 nor to start the MAM treatment programme for children under 5 years of age, PLWGs, TB patients and people living with HIV/AIDS in the camps.

Donors (in alphabetical order): Burundi, Canada, European Union, France, Germany, Global Partnership for Education, Hilton Foundation, Japan, Kerry Group, Monaco, Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, United States of America, World Bank.