Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel with a population of 4.8 million that lives over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km² territory.

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought, resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally impacting the population’s productive capacity, resilience, and food security. According to the 2021 November Cadre Harmonisé, around 660,740 people (15 percent of the population) will be in phase 3 (crisis) or beyond in the next lean season, between June and August 2022, an increase of 125,850 people (+23.5 percent) compared to last year. The national global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate stood at 11.1 percent, while the prevalence of chronic malnutrition reached 17 percent (2021 SMART).

Mauritania began its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in March 2021. As of January 2022, 977,788 people are fully vaccinated (20.3 percent of the population) against COVID-19 and 24,162 people are already received a booster with a total of 57,794 confirmed cases, 51,877 recoveries and 937 deaths.

Mauritania continues to host the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa. The Malian refugee situation entered its ninth years and the security conditions in Mali remain volatile, resulting in a continuous refugee influx to Mauritania. As of October 2021, 67,032 refugees were registered by UNHCR in the Mbera camp.

WFP country portfolio aims to meet the basic food and nutrition needs of affected people as well as to provide UNHAS flight services for all humanitarian and development partners. In parallel, WFP strives to ensure the continuation of resilience programmes, while strengthening institutional capacity and minimizing gender inequalities. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.

- Population: 4.8 million
- Income Level: Lower middle
- 2019 Human Development Index: 157 out of 189
- Chronic malnutrition: 19.6% of children between 6-59 months

Contact info: Farah Kashaf (farah.kashaf@wfp.org)
Country Director: Kinday Samba
Further information: https://www.wfp.org/countries/mauritania
Main photo: Credit: WFP/Mohamed Lemine Rajel Cheikh Mohamed
Caption: Measuring Mid Upper Arm Circumference at Mbera camp,

In Numbers

154 mt of food, including specialized nutritious food distributed
USD 0.6 m cash-based transfers made
USD 8.4 m for six months (January – June 2022) net funding requirements

122,122 people assisted
In December 2021

Operational Updates

- In the Mbera camp, where Malian refugees are hosted, WFP-UNHCR’s comprehensive retargeting exercise was finalized. Based on socio-economic survey data analysis, three groups of refugees have been identified according to their vulnerability status. The process was finalized with the notification of the results of the last appeals from the community feedback mechanism put in place (3,437 appeal cases were received and processed). The final categorization was simplified to 3 vulnerability groups (Group 1 to 3). Group 1 will be included by Tekavoul in the national social safety net; group 2 will benefit from the WFP cash assistance; group 3 will no longer receive WFP cash and food assistance. Based on the result of retargeting exercises, WFP will conduct general food and cash distributions from January 2022. For the December 2021 general food distribution which took place based on the previous targeting scheme (Group 1 to 4), WFP assisted 57,846 refugees in groups 1 to 3 with food and cash, 6,442 refugees in group 4 and 1,292 new arrivals with cash only. In parallel, for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, 482 children (of whom 236 girls) aged 6-59 months and 219 pregnant and lactating women received 1 mt of specialised nutritious food. For the prevention of malnutrition activities, WFP reached 1,076 pregnant and lactating women with 7 mt of specialised nutritious food. As part of the school feeding programme, WFP distributed school meals to 5,686 school children (7 mt of fortified food distributed).

- After the end of the 2021 lean season distributions, WFP participated in meetings of the technical safety net group under the newly established National Scheme for Prevention and Response to Food and Nutritional Crises (DCAN). The group prepared the 2021 lean season lessons-learned exercise and 2022 planning workshop to take place on 19 and 20 January 2022.

- WFP’s school feeding programme reached 48,702 students at 373 public schools of the three targeted regions (Guidimakha, Assaba, and Hodh el Charghi). Moreover, WFP worked on the renewal of Partnership Agreements with partner NGOs to implement and monitor the school feeding programme in 2022.

- For the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, 9,319 children aged 6-59 months and 1,761 pregnant and lactating women received specialised nutritious foods. Furthermore, December marked the end of nutrition activities in the Gorgol and Tagant intervention sites.

As part of the long-term integrated resilience package implemented in the regions of Hodh El Charghi, Assaba, and Guidimakha, WFP through the Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2021 Total Requirements (in USD)</th>
<th>2021 Available Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39.6 m</td>
<td>52 m</td>
<td>8.4 m</td>
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Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crisis.

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Activities:**
- Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and preventive nutrition ration and MAM treatment to refugees
- Provide food assistance and supplementary feeding to pandemic affected populations/households.

Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Food-insecure populations, including school-age children, have access to adequate and nutritious food all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience-building

**Activities:**
- Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment
- Provide school meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

Strategic Result 3: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls, have improved nutritional status all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**Activities:**
- MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and lactating women and girls attending pre/post-natal care

Strategic Result 4: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks have more resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience-building

**Activities:**
- Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets

Strategic Result 5: Country strategic capacities

Strategic Outcome 5: National institutions have strengthened capacities to manage food security, nutrition, and social protection policies and programmes, including an adaptive (shock responsive) social protection system, by 2030.

**Focus area:** Resilience-building

**Activities:**
- Provide training and technical support to governmental institutions

Strategic Result 6: Global partnership support

Strategic Outcome 6: Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience-building

**Activities:**
- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners
- Provide on-demand logistics services to Government, United Nations and Non-Governmental partners to facilitate effective field operations (CPA Service Provision and platform activities)
- Provide training and field advisory support to humanitarian partners

Programme carried out a joint mission with the national agency for the Great Green Wall. The mission included the villages in Kiffa and Boundey to identify sites for the implementation of FFA activities within the framework of the Spanish Debt Swap project. The Debt Swap is an agreement between Spain and Mauritania, in which, instead of repaying its debt to Spain, Mauritania is using the funds to strengthen the food security of target populations through the creation or rehabilitation of productive infrastructure. About 32 sites were identified to have potential for FFA. WFP also installed three solar pumps for the irrigation of market gardening at Gvave Peulh, Gourmel, and Bough El Meu FFA sites.

- As part of the early warning and response planning (adaptive social protection system), WFP participated in the Social Register Committee (WFP, UNICEF, and World Bank) to update the national database. In collaboration with the World Bank, WFP continued to support defining the implementation decree of the future National Food and Nutritional Crisis Response Fund.

- In line with WFP’s commitment to come up with compensatory solutions to drought, WFP’s Country Director and the Director-General of the African Union’s African Risk Capacity (ARC Replica) met to discuss reconstituting rainfall estimates and recalculating the index of insurance, assessing a compensatory disbursement with ARC’s reinsurers, reimbursing the premium paid to ARC by WFP to insure against drought.

- Following the end of the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, WFP organised a men’s cooking competition in Assaba region to boost the involvement of men in WFP’s nutrition activities. In addition, with the support of WFP’s West Africa Regional Bureau based in Dakar, WFP conducted a gender-sensitive contextual analysis at 5 pilot sites in Guidimakha to identify community resilience initiatives, including mixed agricultural cooperatives and women’s market gardening cooperatives.

- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) transported 178 passengers and over 257 kg of light cargo connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa, Nema, and Bassikounou, through 38 in-country rotations.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The December market price analysis confirmed the upward trend of the prices of main commodities both compared to the five-year average (2016-2020) and last year’s figures due to the inflation in the international market, on which Mauritania is largely dependent.

Challenges

- WFP faces an estimated funding shortage of approximately USD 8.4 million for the next six months (January 2022 to June 2022) representing 33 percent of the requirements for the period (USD 25.6 million).

- The two most worrisome situations concern assistance to Malian refugees, and the school feeding programme, both facing more than 80 percent shortfall. If resources are not immediately secured, a complete interruption of both food and cash assistance for 64,689 refugees will occur in the camp starting from the beginning of March 2022, and a complete interruption of the school feeding programme for 50,000 students will happen from the end of January 2022. WFP is strengthening advocacy efforts with a wide range of partners to address these gaps.

Donors

Donors to WFP Mauritania CSP 2019 - 2022 include Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Mauritania, Monaco, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States. Additional support was provided by ARC Replica, UN Adaptation Funds, UN CERF, UN PBF, UN SDG, UNICEF and UNHCR.