Operational Context

Niger is a land-locked and food-deficit Sahelian country with a population of over 24.2 million (UNFPA, 2020) and an annual demographic growth of 3.9 percent, the highest in Africa. The results of the November 2021 Cadre Harmonisé estimated that 2.5 million people are currently food insecure (November-December 2021) and 3.6 million will be food insecure over the next agricultural lean season (June-August 2022).

Food and nutrition insecurity are driven by poverty, environmental degradation, and recurring shocks. In addition, the deteriorating security situation on the border with Mali, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria is causing large population displacements coupled with deterioration of the socioeconomic situation.

Through its Country Strategic Plan, WFP Niger is adopting a two-pronged approach, providing lifesaving support while implementing an integrated package of interventions to strengthen the capacities of national institutions, for example through social protection and reinforce the resilience of vulnerable communities to shocks. WFP has been working in Niger since 1968.

The first case of COVID-19 in Niger was declared on 19 March 2020. As of 1 December 2021, there have been 7,028 confirmed cases, 6,627 people cured and 260 deaths. WFP response has adjusted lifesaving and resilience activities to comply with all COVID-19 preventive requirements. This includes integrating protection and WASH measures to mitigate health risks, implementing operational and programmatic changes to activities and distributions, and adapting transfer modalities.

In Numbers

- 4,577 mt* of food distributed
- USD 5,850,000* of cash-based transfers made
- USD 77 m six months (January to June 2022) net funding requirements.
- 1 million people assisted

In December 2021

* These are preliminary figures.

Strategic Updates

- **Ongoing food and nutrition crisis**: The Government made an unprecedented move to raise the alarm on the looming food crisis in Niger, putting together an emergency response plan of over USD 280 million to be implemented between November 2021 and March 2022. This is as a result of the November 2021 Cadre Harmonisé (CH), showing 2.5 million people in need during the current phase (October - December 2021) and projecting 3.6 million during the next lean season (June – August 2022). The funding gap for this plan, however, is estimated to be 75% (USD 210 million). The Government will develop a subsequent plan (Plan de Soutien) that will cover the needs until December 2022. Several initiatives in support of this appeal have emerged, including a meeting with donors jointly planned by UN agencies including WFP, FAO and UNICEF, scheduled for January 2022.

- WFP continues to coordinate with the Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion des catastrophes et Crises Alimentaires (DNPGCA) and partners for an adequate response to reach the most vulnerable people through emergency assistance. Further, WFP and partners are leveraging the Nutrition Technical Group to guide and influence actions for the nutrition sector, in response to the ongoing food and nutrition crisis. Lastly, the Food Security Cluster (FSC) co-led by FAO and WFP is coordinating the response closely with the DNPGCA, and other sectors/clusters such as the Cash working group, the Nutrition Technical Group, and the Protection Cluster.

- In support of the Government’s emergency response plan, WFP is scaling up both its emergency response and its resilience plans. While the first one will address urgent humanitarian needs, the scale-up of the resilience plan will tackle both short-term needs (thanks to cash and food transfers), protect resilience investments and gains to date, enhance livelihood potential and continue helping to reduce the need for humanitarian assistance. A third budget revision is underway to reflect increasing needs and the number of people to be assisted throughout 2022 under various outputs: from 742,000 to 2 million people for crisis response (55% of the 3.6 million people identified as vulnerable by the CH during the next lean season) and from 1.3 million to 1.8 million for integrated resilience.

Operational Updates

- Through its emergency response, WFP reached 636,000 people including refugees, internally displaced people and host populations in December. This includes up to 130,000 flood-affected beneficiaries supported with almost USD 1.2 million in cash assistance. Emergency operations continue to be hindered by the lack of access to communities affected by conflicts in addition to shortfalls in funding.

- WFP reached 250,000 children in 1,580 schools with school meals (including 127,530 girls and 122,529 boys).
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2020-2024)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Result</th>
<th>2021 Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>2021 Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

- **Strategic Outcome 1:** Crisis affected populations, including refugees, IDPs host communities and returnees in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of a crisis
  - **Focus area:** Crisis response
  - **Activities:**
    - Provide an integrated food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations (refugees, IDPs, host communities and returnees)

- **Strategic Outcome 2:** School-aged girls and boys including adolescents in targeted food insecure and pastoral regions have access to adequate and nutritious food during the school year.
  - **Focus area:** Resilience building
  - **Activities:**
    - Provide an integrated school feeding package to boys, girls, and adolescents during the school year in a way that relies on and stimulates local production (home-grown school feeding)

- **Strategic Outcome 3:** Nutritionally vulnerable populations including children 6-59 months, pregnant women and girls, adolescent girls, in targeted areas have improved nutritional status by 2024
  - **Focus area:** Resilience building
  - **Activities:**
    - Support national nutrition programme through provision of preventive and curative nutrition services (including SBCC, local food fortification, complementary feeding and capacity strengthening) to targeted populations.

- **Strategic Outcome 4:** Food systems are sustainable
  - **Focus area:** Resilience building
  - **Activities:**
    - Provide livelihood support to food insecure and at-risk men, women, boys, and girls, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets (FFA), climate risk management measures, and value chains.

- **Strategic Outcome 5:** Countries strengthened capacities
  - **Focus area:** Resilience building
  - **Activities:**
    - Provide capacity strengthening to national, decentralised institutions and partners on: (i) coherent and gender-transformative intersectoral policies; (ii) planning, (iii) coordination mechanisms, (iv) ownership and programme implementation, and (v) knowledge management.

- **Strategic Outcome 6:** Global partnership
  - **Focus area:** Crisis response
  - **Activities:**
    - Provide UNHAS flight services to partners, to access areas of humanitarian interventions.
    - Provide logistics, ITC, and coordination services to partners in absence of alternative to ensure humanitarian assistance as well as other supply chain services and expertise on demand.

- **Nutrition interventions** continued in December, with WFP supporting 122,114 beneficiaries with treatment and preventative care. In support of resilience building, a total of 66,814 beneficiaries participated in the food assistance for assets programme (FFA). WFP supported FFA beneficiaries with land rehabilitation and market gardening as well as in the production of compost at the site level to compensate for the lack of manure in preparation for the market gardening season. Partners were also trained in the planning and implementation of the activities scheduled for 2022.

- **Adaptive Social Protection (ASP):** WFP received top-up funding as part of the joint UNICEF and WFP social programme for continuous joint efforts to strengthen the ASP in Niger and to address the urgent needs.

Assessment and Monitoring

- **A summary of evidence on the Food Security and Nutrition Security report** has been developed by WFP and shared with donors and partners in Niger. The key messages of this report laid emphasis on the magnitude of the crisis based on numbers of food insecure people (as per the November 2021 CH analysis), cereal production deficit figures and food price trends.

- **The results of the November 2021 SMART,** which show that Niger continues to register high malnutrition rates, were validated in December.

Challenges

- **Funding shortfalls:** WFP is experiencing critical funding gaps: for the next 12 months, WFP needs USD 223 million to maintain its operations. Early mobilization of resources is key to enable WFP to coordinate and implement effective responses.

- **To ensure UNHAS sustainability beyond March 2022,** WFP developed a specific funding appeal which was shared with donors and partners in Niger.

- **Pipeline break:** The operation continues to experience acute commodity shortfalls triggered by supply chain constraints. WFP is coordinating local purchases with local authorities and is supporting private-sector-led and equitable supply chains of locally available and affordable nutritious foods. WFP also continues to leverage the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) and advance financing solutions to reduce lead times.

- **Access:** On 7 December, the Prefect of the Department of Tera (Tillabery) issued a decree requiring the immediate closure of all money transfer agencies in the Department until further notice due to persisting insecurity. Similarly on 22 December, the Governor of the Tillabery region ordered the immediate closure of gas stations in six municipalities in the region. Recent intensification of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) activities in the area were cited as a motivating factor. The closure of gas stations risks creating logistical challenges for WFP and its partners, who rely on these stations for refueling to reach the most vulnerable communities with food and nutrition activities. WFP is closely monitoring the security situation and the possible impact on distributions to the food security situation.

Donors: Donors to WFP Niger in 2021 include Canada, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Government of Niger, Norway, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and USA. Additional support has been provided by UNICEF and UNAIDS.