WFP El Salvador
Country Brief
June 2022

Operational Context

El Salvador has a population of 6.3 million. Since 2020 its economy has been seriously impacted by COVID-19 and climate shocks. After a gradual recovery, the economy is expected to grow by 3.2 percent in 2022. However, challenges persist. The fiscal deficit is 4.5 percent of GDP, and the debt is 85.3 percent. Food production represents only 5 percent of GDP, relying heavily on food imports. Further, 27 percent of the families live in multidimensional poverty with multiple disadvantages at once (e.g., poor health or malnutrition, poor quality of work, or little schooling).

Recurrent and adverse weather conditions limit efforts on reduction of poverty and food insecurity (rank 28th in the Global Climate Risk Index 2021). In July 2022, a moderate to severe weather drought period is expected (40 to 60 percent probability). The climate phenomena could have severe consequences on the basic grain production of smallholder farmers. This situation causes a risk of depletion of household food stocks, a decrease in dietary diversity, and increase in malnutrition among children under five (14 percent stunted) and first graders (30 percent overweight or obese).

Crime and violence threaten social development and economic growth in El Salvador and are among the main reasons of migration for Salvadorans (Femicide and homicide rates per 100,000 people in 2021: 2 and 18).

WFP has been present in El Salvador since 1969, supporting the capacity development of the Government to i) improve the social protection of vulnerable groups; ii) mitigate natural disaster risks; and iii) strengthen the ability of producers to adapt to climate change.

In Numbers

USD 665,886 of cash-based transfers made*
USD 5.7 m six months (July - December 2022) net funding requirements, representing 42% of the total
25,305 people assisted* in June 2022

Operational Updates

- The WFP Executive Board approved the country strategic plan 2022-2027. WFP designed this Strategic Plan through a participatory process with the Government, United Nations agencies, and other partners. Over the next five years, the aim is to strengthen food and nutrition security, contribute to sustainable food systems and promote employment opportunities for youth at risk of irregular migration.
- WFP distributed cash to 14,000 people (62 percent women) affected by multiple emergencies. The assistance supports them to cover immediate food needs.
- WFP strengthened the early warning system of San Salvador by equipping the Directorate General of Civil Protection with a video surveillance system. The system allows activating immediate response protocols in the event of increased water flows during heavy rainfalls. This emergency preparedness effort benefits over 28,000 people in the urban area.
- WFP strengthened the capacity of the 14 staff members of the Gender Result Network. This net is an institutional mechanism that aims to facilitate the integration of gender equality into WFP’s operation. The training focused on the objectives of the 2022 gender policy: (1) achieving equitable access to food security and nutrition; (2) addressing the root causes of gender inequalities; and (3) advancing the economic empowerment of women and girls.

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Population: 6.4 million
Income Level: Lower middle
2020 Human Development Index: 124 out of 189
Chronic malnutrition: 14% of children between 6-59 months

*Preliminary numbers
Monitoring

- WFP conducted the post-monitoring survey among the young population served with food assistance in the Departments of La Libertad and San Salvador. The survey aims to reveal the value, use, acceptability and quality of the assistance provided. This exercise includes beneficiary perceptions regarding crosscutting indicators such as gender, protection and accountability to affected populations. The results are expected to be presented by the end of August 2022.

Challenges

- WFP monitoring reveals an increase in the prices of food and fertilizers due to the effects of the Ukraine crisis. Up to June 2022, the basic food basket price, rural and urban, increased by 10 percent. WFP provided household food assistance worth USD 120 per month, which covered 75 percent of the basic rural food basket. However, due to prices increase, the amount of assistance covers only 70 percent. WFP continues monitoring the situation to anticipate actions to mitigate the impact on food security and nutrition.

Donors

- Canada, El Salvador, European Union, Germany, Italy, Republic of Korea (the), Switzerland, United States of America, and private donors.