WFP Venezuela
Country Brief
July 2022

Operational Context
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) has been affected by a lengthy socioeconomic crisis that directly impacted people across the country. In 2020 the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shrunk by 30 percent, the seventh year in a row.

According to estimates by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2018 a third of all people living in extreme poverty in Latin America were in Venezuela, compared to 8 percent in 2014. Economic difficulties have led to large-scale population movements. Over the years, access to nutritious food and a diversified diet has become increasingly expensive. This situation is likely to have been exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has strained livelihoods across the whole Latin American region.

In addition, the current Ukraine crisis is severely disrupting food, energy, and financial markets globally. Venezuela imports more than 70% of the processed foods consumed in the country and is extremely vulnerable to international price fluctuations. Hence, the increase in food prices will affect families’ capacity to sustain basic consumption.

In April 2021, the Government and WFP signed a memorandum of understanding which allowed WFP to establish a presence in the country and provide support to beneficiaries in vulnerable areas. WFP established a Country Office on 30 April and distributed the first food assistance on 6 July 2021. As of July 2022, WFP has established its presence in the states of Falcon, Trujillo, Yaracuy, Barinas, Anzoátegui, Monagas, Sucre, and Delta Amacuro.

Population: 29.2 million (ECLAC, 2022)
Food Insecurity: 9.3 million (FSA, 2019)
Human Development Index 2020: 113 out of 189
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity): USD 7,700

In Numbers
2,277 mt of food assistance distributed*
USD 42.4 m six months (August 2022 – January 2023) net funding requirements, representing 42% of total needs
203,000 people assisted* in July 2022

*Preliminary figures

Operational Updates
- In July, WFP reached 203,000 beneficiaries in 1,700 targeted schools across the seven states where the school meals programme is currently implemented. More in detail, WFP reached: 155,200 children under 6; 9,800 students with disabilities; and 38,000 school personnel.
- Among the seven states, WFP started distributing school meals in the state of Sucre, reaching 18,000 people in 115 schools, including schools in hard-to-reach communities.
- WFP also plans to reach schools in Delta Amacuro, where before the launch, it conducted a multifunctional assessment to identify the needs and habits of school communities and the specific needs of Indigenous communities. Findings showed a high level of vulnerability regarding access to water and food, as well as highly vulnerable livelihoods. The assessment also confirmed programme feasibility and showed overall acceptance of WFP’s food basket.
- As supplementary feeding for children, WFP started the distribution of Super Cereal Plus in the states of Trujillo, Barinas, and Yaracuy. WFP’s cooperating partners carried out training sessions for families and school personnel to ensure proper preparation of Super Cereal Plus. WFP aims to start the distribution of Super Cereal Plus in August in the states of Monagas, Anzoátegui, Sucre, and Delta Amacuro.

Monitoring
- In July, WFP conducted a post-distribution monitoring exercise with questions, among others on the vulnerability profile (e.g. how the beneficiaries use the food basket, perception of WFP programme, etc). The main findings showed that 80 percent of the beneficiaries shared the food basket distributed by WFP among the household members.

Contact info: Chiara Cardosi (chiara.cardosi@wfp.org)
Country Director: Laura Melo
Further information: WFP Venezuela
The beneficiaries also informed that they were satisfied with the quality of the food received and thus the food supported their needs. Furthermore, the PDM's data showed that they continued to be treated with dignity by WFP's cooperating partners and staff.

- WFP carried out a Market Functionality Index exercise in the state of Falcon to assess the capacities of the market and the feasibility of local purchases for its school meals programme. Results showed the feasibility of local purchases and highlighted the instability of the prices as the main concern.

- In July, WFP received a total of 900 cases through its toll-free helpline. Among the cases, for example, some beneficiaries expressed concern about the transition from take-home rations to on-site meals, stressing that this could affect the food consumption of other household members. Others asked for information regarding the delivery of the food baskets during the school closure during the summer break. WFP constantly works to address beneficiaries’ concerns strengthening its communication activities about the scope of the school meal programme and highlighting the benefits of on-site school meals. In addition, WFP informed the beneficiaries about the double take-home rations in August, to provide crucial nutritional support to children during the summer holidays.

**Challenges**

- The global supply chain disruption continues to affect WFP’s procurement processes, particularly the booking confirmations of food shipments. This issue led to an increase in the distribution costs and a lack of salt and vegetable oil.

- WFP needs support from its donors in confirming funds on time to successfully preposition commodities.

**Donors**

Canada, European Union (DG-ECHO), France, Germany (GFFO), Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States of America (USAID).

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