In the last decade, Bolivia made significant progress on improving food and nutrition security and reducing extreme poverty. Given the notable socioeconomic improvement, the country accomplished a middle-income status. However, poverty and malnutrition levels remain amongst the highest in the region.

The COVID-19 pandemic followed after a severe political crisis in 2019, adding significant pressures to a fragile institutional setting and political imbalances. Both factors’ situations impacted on the socioeconomic situation and food security of Bolivians, especially on those who work in the informal market, smallholder farmers and indigenous communities with precarious sources of income.

WFP Bolivia is currently implementing its Country Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022. Adapting to the country’s needs and considering yearly natural disasters, WFP is consolidating its value added as the partner of choice for both emergency response and capacity strengthening, technical support, advocacy, and communications, acting as a facilitator in support of the Government. WFP’s interventions are in line with the Five-Year National Development Plan 2020 that focuses on social development of vulnerable indigenous populations. WFP has been in Bolivia since 1963.

- To create climate smart livelihoods and engage in inclusive economic activities within the context of the pandemic and climate crisis, WFP provided humanitarian assistance through its resilience programming to the Uru Indigenous nation. In July, WFP assessed the needs and quantified the work for the rehabilitation and building of productive assets, such as water management as well as greenhouse production systems. Further, WFP assessed the needs and efforts essential for sustainable coordination, so each activity will be carried out with a local counterpart.

- On 20 July, WFP and the Ministry of Rural Development and Lands launched the “Integrated Context Analysis Map of Vulnerability to Food Insecurity in Bolivia at the Community Level”, also known as Integrated Community Context Analysis. This tool will help identify the risk of food insecurity in each community and help them to strengthen their livelihoods.

- WFP Bolivia collected data about food access and food security status to assess the needs of the most vulnerable people living in peri-urban areas. WFP Bolivia’s Country Director visited different popular dining rooms and shelters in La Paz and El Alto. According to a religious organization, “the crisis and increasing prices keep us from our service to the poorest and the possibility of receiving more adults who are abandoned in the Mother Teresa Calcutta shelter, who come to us because of hunger” (Mother Maria Hosea).

- WFP keeps monitoring the market because of the epidemiological situation in the country. Bolivia continues to be severely affected by the fifth pandemic wave. In July, the COVID-19 cases increased by 62 percent and reached a daily record of 4,173 new cases on 13 July.

Monitoring

- WFP Bolivia monitors the effects on inflation due to the impact of the Ukraine crisis and registered that the prices of different food products continued to increase. In July, the monthly Consumer Price Index showed a positive variation of 0.39 points (this index shows that inflation is increasing). Together with vegetables and tubers which registered a significant positive variation, the wheat flour was up 25.01 points, reaching 123.51 points.
Challenges

• Originally planned to take place in 2023, the Population and Housing Census was postponed by the Government to 2024. Other administrative or political entities highlight the importance of carrying out this exercise within 2023. In July, the dialogue on the census started between the Government and these entities.

• The Government of Bolivia maintained, among other products, the fuel subsidy and warned that this will have negative consequences on the fiscal deficit.

Partnerships

• On 8 July, the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) met with WFP Bolivia to discuss the importance of food security and the cooperation between the two organizations. WFP representative, Mr Alejandro López-Chicheri, stressed that achieving food security is the fundamental solution for "living well". He also stressed the importance of cooperating with KOICA and the Korean Culture and Information Service to end hunger and improve education, gender equality, and agricultural development.

• WFP Bolivia started to discuss possible support to be provided in the department of Beni about aspects such as climate change. The Director of the Committee on Operation and Emergencies of the Governorate of Beni, Wilson Avila, informed WFP Bolivia about the most pressing needs and declared emergency state in different regions of the department of Beni.

Donors

Germany, Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC), and the Emerging Donor Matching Fund (EDMF).