WFP Bangladesh
Country Brief
July 2022

Operational Updates

- WFP is preparing to distribute food and cash assistance to 18,000 disaster-affected families in response to severe floods in northeastern Bangladesh. This follows WFP’s immediate life-saving assistance which provided 34,000 flood-affected households with 85 mt of fortified biscuits. WFP is appealing for US$22 million to support emergency assistance for up to 50,000 households for over six months and will work to serve the flood-affected population in cooperation with FAO, UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF.

- NGOs provided food distributions on Bhasan Char Island; WFP will resume in-kind food assistance in August when funds are available. WFP continued to support pregnant and lactating women, and children under 5, with specialized nutritious food commodities through its malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes, which reached 7,523 individuals on the island.

- In Cox’s Bazar, WFP provided general food assistance to 891,000 Rohingya refugees using e-vouchers. Through 21 e-voucher outlets established by WFP, households can select from a variety of cereals, fresh food items and spices. More than 200 households were displaced due to landslides in the camps and received rapid food assistance from WFP.

- To address malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in Cox’s Bazar, WFP provided preventive and curative services to pregnant and nursing women, and children aged 6-59 months. Almost 208,000 refugees were reached at 45 integrated nutrition sites in the camps, along with 9,000 Bangladeshis at 130 local community clinics.

- Through the school feeding programme in Cox’s Bazar, WFP provided 116,000 Bangladeshi and 267,000 refugee children with fortified biscuits at local schools and camp learning centres, respectively.

- Under WFP’s disaster risk reduction programme, 701 Bangladeshis conducted canal, road and drainage works in the local community in Cox’s Bazar. In the refugee camps, 10,000 men and women were engaged to construct pedestrian pathways, roads, guide walls and stairs to improve camp access and mitigate monsoon impacts.

- As part of the WFP livelihoods programme in Cox’s Bazar, 24,600 vulnerable Bangladeshi women are receiving training and start-up capital to set up their own businesses via mobile money transfers. A further 19,600 programme graduates continued to receive technical support for market and value chain development, including smallholder farmers linked to local markets via WFP and FAO aggregation centres.

In Numbers

- **2,896 mt** of food distributed
- **US$12.8 million** cash-based transfers made
- **US$102 million** net funding requirements (August 2022 – February 2023)
- **1.3 million people** assisted in July 2022, incl. 892,000 Rohingya refugees

Operational Context

WFP started its first operation in Bangladesh in 1974. While it has made significant economic growth in the past decade, the country still faces challenges with nearly one third of the population facing food insecurity and 20 percent living below the national poverty line. Bangladesh is also vulnerable to natural hazards with most of the population residing in areas that are prone to natural hazards such as floods and cyclones.

The country is still recovering from the economic shocks of the COVID-19 crisis. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to fall to 5.1 percent in 2022 from 8.2 percent in 2019 and the average income of the poor has fallen 23 percent below the pre-COVID level.

Since 2017, in response to the influx of over 745,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, WFP has been providing food assistance and nutrition services in the Cox’s Bazar camps as well as life-skills training, disaster risk reduction activities and common engineering services. WFP also supports surrounding Bangladeshi communities through longer-term nutrition, school feeding, livelihoods and DRR interventions.

In 2022, WFP began implementing its new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2022-2026. This CSP reinforces its commitment to work with the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen partnerships and improve the resilience of vulnerable communities while also providing food assistance to those affected by emergencies.

Since late 2020, the Government has been relocating small groups of Rohingya from the camps in Cox’s Bazar to Bhasan Char Island, which, as of end-July, housed 27,500 refugees. In October 2021, UNHCR and the Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding which sets the policy framework for the UN humanitarian response on the island.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population: 167 million</th>
<th>2020 Human Development Index: 133 out of 189</th>
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<tr>
<td>Income Level: Lower middle</td>
<td>Chronic malnutrition: 31% of children between 6-59 months</td>
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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

<table>
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<th>Total Requirement (in US$)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in US$)</th>
<th>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in US$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.62 bn</td>
<td>272.14 m</td>
<td>102 m</td>
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Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Populations affected by crisis in Bangladesh are able to meet basic food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after crises

Focus area: Crisis response

Act. 1: Provide food, nutrition and self-reliance assistance to crisis-affected populations.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: By 2026, the nutrition needs of women, children and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh are met through national institutions that have enhanced capacities to design and implement gender- and nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes

Focus area: Root causes

Act. 2: Support national institutions in strengthening their capacity to design and implement inclusive and nutrition- and gender-sensitive safety net programmes to meet the nutrition needs of women, children and vulnerable groups.

Strategic Result 4: Food Systems are Sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: By 2026, vulnerable communities in Bangladesh are more resilient to shocks and natural disasters owing to enhanced national disaster management capacity and flexible, nutrition- and gender-sensitive social safety net programmes.

Focus area: Resilience building

Act. 3: Assist national institutions and communities in strengthening their capacity to implement inclusive, responsive and nutrition- and gender-sensitive safety net programmes and in disaster risk preparedness and response to protect the food security and nutrition of vulnerable populations.

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise and technology, strengthen global partnership support to country efforts to achieve the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 4: Vulnerable crisis-affected populations in Bangladesh benefit from enhanced coordination and improved common services during and after crises

Focus area: Crisis response

Act. 4: Provide coordination and common services to humanitarian and development partners and the Government

- To enhance food security and nutrition among the most vulnerable refugees, 29,800 people were engaged in self-reliance activities, including aquaculture and vertical gardening, handicraft production and food packet recycling.

- Under the urban food assistance project, WFP provided 3,030 households in Dhaka slums with cash transfers to purchase food, and social and behaviour change communication to incentivize healthy and diversified food purchases.

- WFP, UNFPA, FAO and UNICEF have a multi-year, joint programme in case of severe floods in northern Bangladesh. In July, WFP updated the common database of 130,000 households under the forecast-based financing programme. Earmarked funds will reach the most vulnerable people, should flooding reach the critical, once-in-five-year levels and anticipatory actions be triggered.

- The Department of Women’s Affairs and WFP jointly facilitated programme orientation sessions on the expansion of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP) for district-level stakeholders.

- The Government and WFP are preparing a study to determine the best modality for the next National School Feeding Programme, expected to start in early 2023.

Monitoring

- WFP received 329 calls via its community feedback hotline, of which 257 calls came from Cox’s Bazar. By end July, the majority of calls were resolved with only 4 percent remaining open.

- In Cox’s Bazar, WFP reached 107 percent of its monitoring target, visiting 201 food assistance and nutrition sites (51 in the camps and 150 in the surrounding Bangladeshi communities). Preliminary findings from the July mobile Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping (mVAM) Food Security Monitoring Bulletin indicate that 75 percent- and 38 percent of households in Sylhet and Mymensingh, respectively, are food-insecure following severe flooding in June, while on average 33 percent of households in the all-Bangladesh were food-insecure.

- MCBP beneficiaries reported wanting to feed protein-rich foods, like egg and chicken, to their children, but sometimes not being able to afford it.

Challenges

- WFP had to temporarily halt work at engineering sites in Cox’s Bazar due to heavy monsoon rainfall.

- Vendors for transport services and heavy machinery began to request price revisions for long-term agreements due to the nationwide increase in fuel prices.

Success Story

Lutfia Begum rears cattle and does tailoring part-time. Thanks to the WFP Seasonal Livelihoods Programme (SLP), she recently started hydroponic farming. Lutfia uses the greens produced to feed her cows nutritious fodder throughout the year. Based in Kurigram, the SLP is training 4,000 households on alternative income-generating activities, so they can continue to earn a living even when the region is beset by monsoon flooding.

Donors

Donors to WFP Bangladesh in 2022 include: Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States of America. Contributions were also received from multilateral funds, private donors, UN CERF and UN pooled funds.