



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP scales up to support the most vulnerable in global food crisis

The World Food Programme (WFP) is leveraging its global presence, capabilities, and partnerships to mitigate the global food crisis fuelled by conflict, climate shocks and COVID-19, compounded by the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine.

WFP is responding to the global food crisis by:

- **Stepping up direct food and nutrition assistance to save lives and livelihoods**
- **Providing technical assistance and services to support national social protection systems**

- **Leveraging partnerships, services and programmes to strengthen food systems.**

WFP requires US\$24 billion to deliver on its operational plan this year and save millions of people from disaster. WFP is very grateful to its donors, including the United States as its biggest single donor, who are stepping up their funding to confront this massive threat. More contributions however are vital as needs are growing and deeper risks lie ahead.

September 2022

Famine threatens

In 2022, up to 345 million people are acutely food insecure or at high risk across 82 countries with WFP presence and where data is available. This is an increase of 200 million people from before the COVID-19 pandemic.

An estimated 50 million people are on the brink of famine (IPC/CH Phase 4 or equivalent) in 45 countries. This includes 970,000 people who are already facing catastrophic famine or famine-like conditions (IPC/CH Phase 5) in parts of Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

The ripple effects of the conflict in Ukraine are making large parts of the world even more fragile and contributing to new humanitarian crises, such as in Sri Lanka, where three quarters of the population have been forced to reduce their food intake because of soaring prices. Overall, 94 percent of WFP country offices report rising food and nutrition needs due to the impact of the Ukraine crisis.

Governments around the globe are sounding the alarm. As of mid-June 2022, in one-third of the countries where WFP works, national governments have publicly recognized that they are facing a food crisis. While governments are stepping up to respond – for example, by rolling out new food basket benefits in Timor-Leste – they are constrained by rising costs, strict sanctions, devalued currencies, high debt burdens and depleted public purses after responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stepping up food and nutrition assistance

WFP alone cannot solve the global food crisis. But as the largest humanitarian organization with more than 80 country offices covering more than 120 countries, WFP is well placed to save both lives and livelihoods.

WFP plans to assist 153 million people this year, a record high, and a significant increase from the already record-high 128 million people reached in 2021. This number is expected to rise: one in four WFP country offices have already received a formal ask from the government to scale-up direct assistance.

The first priority of WFP's operations plan is sufficient corporate resources to scale up humanitarian assistance where the global food crisis threatens to contribute to increased mortality. Otherwise, people will be forced to widely adopt emergency survival strategies like skipping meals, selling family assets and reducing dietary diversity, threatening to harm their health, nutrition and well-being.

Countries already hosting a large burden of people experiencing acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above or equivalent) and/or people who are displaced are being prioritized for food assistance and nutrition support. Special attention is being given to populations facing emergency or worse levels of food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 4 and above or equivalent), as well as acute malnutrition.

For example, in Afghanistan, WFP is scaling up to reach 23 million people this year. WFP is making sure that we help the people who need it the most. In the country's remote Ghor province, where more than 20,000 are facing catastrophic food insecurity (IPC Phase 5), WFP is stepping up to assist 800,000 people with emergency food assistance.

Supporting social protection

While WFP must continue to deliver direct humanitarian assistance, the only way to manage and mitigate the worst parts of the global food crisis will be to work together with governments to support national social protection systems.

WFP's second operational priority will be to provide technical assistance and services to support national social protection systems, including with data analysis, assessment and

targeting, social protection transfer solutions and technical assistance. Already, as of mid-June, two-thirds of WFP country offices are discussing additional support needs with governments and financial institutions.

For example, in Ukraine, WFP is scaling up its support to the national social protection already in place, targeting to support half a million people per month with cash transfers. WFP has also deployed its social protection experts to neighbouring countries hosting Ukrainian refugees like Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova and Romania to help strengthen and scale up their social protection systems too.

Delivery on this second priority will build on the learning and experience of WFP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to implement and scale up data analysis within existing government systems. To this end, WFP will consolidate its social protection offer across programme, data analysis, technology and partnerships to ensure agreements with governments are drafted quickly and that data protection principles are maintained.

Strengthening food systems

Finally, WFP is focusing on building and reinforcing food systems, the complex networks that get food from "farm to fork" – everything from producing, to transporting, to processing, to consuming food. This will help to stave off the current food access crisis from becoming a wider food availability crisis in 2023.

For example, WFP is expanding its home-grown school meals programme in countries such as Malawi, Niger, Ethiopia, Somalia and Haiti, purchasing produce from local farmers to serve to schoolchildren. This provides schoolchildren with food that is safe, diverse, nutritious and above all local. At the same time, farmers are given access to a sizeable and stable market, helping to create new jobs and mitigate the impacts of the crisis.

WFP's experience, capacities and partnerships span the full breadth of food systems. However, WFP is giving special attention and prioritizing resources to areas where we can demonstrate concrete value at scale and in the short to medium term, including in food production, food fortification and transformation, and retail and consumer support. As the crisis complicates shipping and sourcing, WFP is also supporting a growing number of countries for food procurement, as well as to enhance or establish national and regional strategic food reserves.

The current global food crisis requires WFP to make clear its value proposition on enhancing food systems. To delivery on this third priority, WFP is making critical investments in its technical capacities, including fertilizer supply chain management and mitigating post-harvest losses, to support the next cropping season.

Hurdles ahead

WFP is facing a triple jeopardy: operational costs are going up, the numbers of the acutely hungry are rising to unprecedented levels, and yet funding for humanitarian operations is dwindling.

WFP is building on its analytical and operational capacities to optimize food baskets, commodity substitutions, transfer values and ways of responding. However, a lack of funding is forcing us to take food from hungry people in order to feed the starving. For example, in Yemen, WFP has been forced to reduce rations for 8 million hungry people to just one-third of their daily caloric requirements in order to prioritize 5 million people on the brink of starvation. Even these 5 million people will receive less than half of the ration they require.

The challenge is simple: we either meet immediate food and nutrition needs while supporting programmes that build long-term resilience, or we will face even bigger problems down the line.