## Operational Context

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) continues to face challenging political and socioeconomic situation, due to a protracted crisis which was further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and global supply chain challenges due to the Ukraine crisis and global food price inflation. Some economic improvements helped curb the hyperinflation in 2021, when the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted at a rate of -3 percent, compared to -30 percent in 2020. Moreover, the Venezuelan economy is expected to grow by 12 percent in 2022, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the food security situation in the country remains of concern. According to the Humanitarian Response Plan 2022-2023, overall, more than five million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Venezuela imports more than 70 percent of the consumed processed foods and is extremely vulnerable to international price fluctuations. In August 2022, food prices increased by 30 percent (World Bank), making access to nutritious food and a diversified diet difficult for most families.

To respond to these needs, WFP reaches most vulnerable children, their families, and their communities through a school-based food assistance. The programme was launched in July 2021, following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in April 2021. As of October, WFP has presence in the states of Falcon, Trujillo, Yaracuy, Barinas, Anzoátegui, Monagas, Sucre and Delta Amacuro, aiming to further expand to additional states.

WFP’s operations in the country are focused on school meals, nutrition activities, school kitchen refurbishment, coordination and information sharing through the Food Security Cluster and the Logistics Cluster, and capacity-strengthening activities.

### In Numbers

- **3,742 mt** of food assistance distributed*
- **USD 49.2 m** six months (November 2022 – April 2023) net funding requirements, representing 55 percent of total needs.
- **210,000 people** assisted*

*Figures from September

### Operational Updates

- As part of the school meals programme, in October, WFP registered 430,000 schoolchildren, school staff and household members that will receive food assistance in 2,000 schools where the programme is implemented. Distributions will resume in early November.

- To date, WFP has distributed fortified food as blanket supplementary feeding to 51,000 children under 3.

- WFP collaborated with United Nations agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and national authorities to implement the flood emergency response plan targeting 20,000 people in Trujillo, Zulia, Táchira and Mérida affected by the tropical waves. In October, WFP started distributing food assistance to 2,600 people affected by the heavy rainfalls in 10 municipalities in the state of Trujillo. In addition, WFP delivered food commodities to support daily distributions of hot meals for 500 people affected by floods and landslides in Las Tejerías, the state of Aragua. The hot meals are distributed in a community centre managed by the non-governmental organization Caritas Venezuela. WFP also donated four mobile storage units to the Venezuelan Civil Protection and Caritas Venezuela, which will be used as collection centres to support the response in Aragua.

- In Falcón, WFP and its cooperating partners started refurbishment works in 125 school kitchens. Additionally, WFP trained cooperating partners on school kitchen infrastructure works in Trujillo, Yaracuy and Barinas, where partners had already started developing the infrastructure work plans.

### Operational Updates

- **Population: 28.3 million** (ECLAC, 2022)
- **Human Development Index: 120 out of 191** (UNDP, 2021)
- **People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance: 5.2 million** (HRP 2022-2023)
- **GDP (Annual Growth rate): -3** (ECLAC, 2021)

**Contact info:** Chiara Cardosi (chiara.cardosi@wfp.org)

**Country Director:** Laura Melo

**Further information:** WFP Venezuela
The Logistics Cluster assessed fluvial transportation in the country, notably in the states of Amazonas, Bolívar and Delta Amacuro. The results will inform the creation of a working group to promote a joint approach to fluvial transport, including timely relevant information for partners operating in hard-to-reach zones.

Monitoring

- In October, WFP carried out a qualitative data collection exercise in Falcón. Forty-five beneficiaries participated in focus groups on market-based assistance, family income, and resource management. Results show that beneficiaries associate commodity and voucher with the possibility of choosing foods based on households’ needs and preferences. However, the main concerns among participants are that the usage of vouchers could deplete food commodities in local stores and that accessing food can be a challenge for people living in rural communities.

- WFP conducted a price monitoring exercise in the state of Falcon. The main findings showed an increase of 17 percent in the cost of the commodities which compose WFP’s food basket between August and September. This price increase might have an impact in the transition from take-home rations to onsite school meals.

Challenges

- Due to challenges in the country of origin, WFP is facing delays in the receipt of pulses. Hence, for the next distributions until the end of 2022, WFP will need to cut the pulse ration by half, distributing 2 kg of pulses instead of 4 kg.

- WFP is experiencing lengthier lead times to purchase and import commodities, as well as increasing distribution costs. Timely confirmation of funding is essential to ensure adequate preposition of food and to mitigate the risk of pipeline breaks and ration cuts.

Donors

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

Additional support has been provided by the United Nations Emergency Response Fund, United Nations Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund.