The Gambia is experiencing a looming food crisis, the worst in a decade. The Cadre Harmonisé findings of November 2022 indicated that 207,666 Gambians are currently in “crisis” (IPC3) and “emergency” (IPC4) food security situations. This figure has increased by 95,690 compared to the 2021 figure of 111,976. For the next lean season (June to August 2023), a projected 319,628 people would be facing food insecurity and in need of emergency assistance which is a 112,916 increase from the 2021 figure of 206,712.

According to the report, key drivers impacting the worsening food and nutrition security situation are high food prices; heavily linked to the Ukraine crisis, loss of employment, climate shocks which led to the reduction of purchasing power of households.

The nutritional status of the population is also alarming in The Gambia (stunting 18.6% and wasting 9.2% - CFSVA 2021) reversing the pre-pandemic gains. Stunting and wasting are major public health problems in The Gambia and have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and now the negative impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Operational Updates

Emergency response:

- WFP’s second and final round of its 2022 flood response’s emergency food assistance through cash transfers was completed in October, reaching 97 percent of the targeted beneficiaries across the country. WFP launched this assistance in August for three months to help 51,200 flood-affected and severely food insecure people meet their basic food needs and replenish food stocks lost during the floods.

School feeding:

- As schools reopened at the end of September, WFP resumed school meals to support education for the most vulnerable children in the country. WFP continues facing funding challenges for school feeding but has been able to resume the programme in 274 schools for over 60,000 children in three of the six education administrative regions. The programme has also resumed in the two regions directly under the supervision of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. There is a pledge by government to increase the school meals budget from D120 million to D165 million (approximatively USD 2.2-2.8 million for the 2022/2023 academic year).

- The Implementation of the Global Agriculture and food Security Project (GAFSP) is well underway. The school feeding component will provide school meals covering 87 schools with a total of 22,924 children. The capacity building of 87 food management committees in the schools has begun to build their capacity in local procurement at the decentralized level.

Nutrition:

- Under its Lean Season Response, WFP completed its third and final round of Preventive Supplementary Feeding distributions in Central River North and Lower River Regions targeting 5,892 children aged 6 – 23 months reached 4723 children in the month of October.

- The monthly Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition of children aged 6-59 months and the pregnant and lactating women/girls (PLW/G) also continued at Lower River Region, Central River North, and Upper River Region reaching 3124 PLW/G and 2281 children.

In Numbers

- 4.4 mt of food assistance distributed
- USD 136,747 cash-based transfers made
- USD 3.5 million six-month (November 2022 – April 2023) net funding requirements
- 106,185 people assisted in October 2022

Operational Context

The Gambia is experiencing a looming food crisis, the worst in a decade. The Cadre Harmonisé findings of November 2022 indicated that 207,666 Gambians are currently in “crisis” (IPC3) and “emergency” (IPC4) food security situations. This figure has increased by 95,690 compared to the 2021 figure of 111,976. For the next lean season (June to August 2023), a projected 319,628 people would be facing food insecurity and in need of emergency assistance which is a 112,916 increase from the 2021 figure of 206,712.

According to the report, key drivers impacting the worsening food and nutrition security situation are high food prices; heavily linked to the Ukraine crisis, loss of employment, climate shocks which led to the reduction of purchasing power of households.

The nutritional status of the population is also alarming in The Gambia (stunting 18.6% and wasting 9.2% - CFSVA 2021) reversing the pre-pandemic gains. Stunting and wasting are major public health problems in The Gambia and have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and now the negative impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war.
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019 - 2022)

2022 Total Requirement (in USD) | 2022 Available Contributions (in USD) | Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
--- | --- | ---
17.4 m | 10.32 m | 3.5 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected populations, including those impacted by seasonal shocks, in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crisis

Focus area: Crisis Response

Strategic Outcome 2: Food-insecure populations including school-aged children, in targeted areas have access to adequate and nutritious food all year

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:
- Provide food assistance to crisis-affected populations
- Provide school meals to vulnerable pre- and primary school children during the school year, and strengthen capacity of local government to manage school meals programmes as a national safety net

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable populations including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls, and other nutritionally vulnerable individuals, in food insecure regions have improved nutritional status by 2023

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:
- Provide specialized nutritious foods to pregnant and lactating women and children under five to treat and prevent acute and chronic malnutrition and provide training and technical support to national institutions to manage nutrition programmes

Strategic Result 3: Countries strengthened capacities

Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure smallholders including vulnerable households in targeted areas have enhanced livelihoods and resilience to better support food security and nutrition needs by 2023

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:
- Provide supply chain and market support including Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) to farmers to increase productivity and access to markets, complemented by community asset creation through Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)

Strategic Result 5: Countries strengthened capacities

Strategic Outcome 5: National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacity to meet Zero Hunger Targets by 2023

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:
- Provide technical assistance to the Government on the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy (N SSP), with focus on the gradual handover of the HGSF

Assessments:
- The National Food Security Survey was conducted in October 2022. A total of 3500 households were sampled and 3460 were reached across the eight municipalities. The survey found that over 26 percent of the interviewed households are food insecure, of which nearly two percent are severely food insecure and nearly 25 percent are moderately food insecure. This represents a 13 percent increase compared to the 2022 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) figure of 13 percent.

- A nutritional sentinel survey was conducted in October 2022 by community health nurses, public health officers and regional nutrition focal points. After being trained, personnel were deployed to the regions for data collection which is now completed with the analysis being finalized.

Partnerships

- As part of the UN Day 2022 celebrations, WFP Country Director accompanied the UN Resident Coordinator and FAO for a joint visit to one of WFP’s beneficiary schools to discuss the impact of school meals on education and the nutritional status of the children as well sensitize the children on the SDGs most notably SDG2 - Zero Hunger.

WFP Regional Director for Western Africa was in Banjul in September to visit some of WFP’s interventions sites in The Gambia and meet with key Ministers, donors and partners. The mission has been a boost towards the country office’s partnership engagements both with Government and development partners.

Donors

Donors to WFP Gambia in 2022 include the Government of The Gambia, European Commission, France, UN CERF, Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, Climate Adaptation Fund, UN Secretariat (SDG fund)