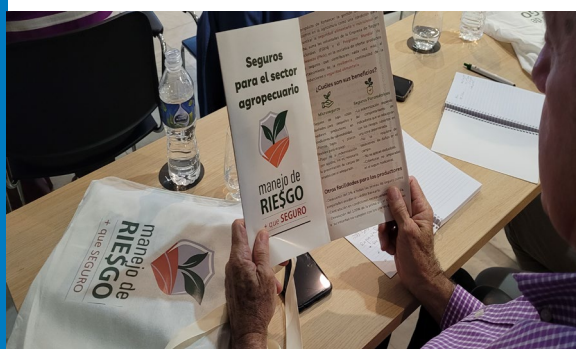




World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Cuba Country Brief March 2023

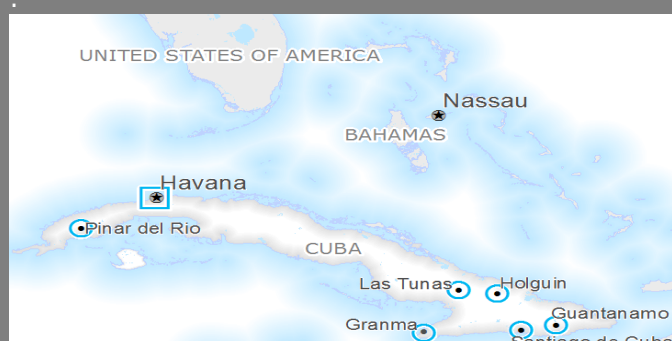


Operational Context

Over the last 60 years, Cuba's comprehensive social protection programmes had primarily eradicated poverty and hunger. However, achieving the 2030 agenda suffered heavy setbacks due to the cumulative effects of the 2008 global financial crisis, frequent natural disasters – including the drought spells currently affecting the country – high global food prices, limited access to credit, low productivity and the embargo by the United States further exacerbating the food security situation in the country. Over the past two years the COVID19 pandemic generated a very significant health cost and had disastrous consequences on the last substantive source of income for the country: tourism.

WFP accompanies the Government on its efforts to develop a new management model to make food-based social protection programmes more efficient and sustainable. WFP supports social safety nets for different vulnerable groups, strengthens agricultural value chains and promotes the improvement of resilience and disaster risk management. These activities contribute to Sustainable Goals 2, 5 and 17.

WFP has been working with Cuba since 1963.



Population: **11.2 million**

2021 Human Development Index: **83rd out of 19**

Income Level: **Upper middle**

2021 Gender Inequality Index: **73rd out of 170**

In Numbers

336 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 0.6 m six months (April - September) net funding requirements, representing six percent of total

135,973 people assisted* as of March 2023

53%



47%



*Preliminary numbers

Operational Updates

- WFP, with its key partner, the Ministry of Education, and in coordination with other authorities, including the National Institute of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology, has been supporting the implementation of the school feeding programme in 18 municipalities. Of these, WFP reached 6 municipalities delivering assistance by providing locally produced food and promoting the integration into the school feeding programme of the smallholder farmers. Within this framework, WFP supported external schools in five provinces to fulfill the requirements to provide onsite school meals through the approval of food menus by the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology.
- WFP supported the Government in delivering food and non-food items (NFI) to assist the population affected by Hurricane Ian, reaching 500,000 beneficiaries with 667 mt.
- WFP is providing capacity strengthening to smallholder farmers, agricultural cooperatives, community canteens and primary schools in 18 municipalities with the aim of supporting the implementation of social protection programmes, including the Government's school feeding programme, Cuba's Family Support System (community canteens) and health centres for pregnant women.
- WFP delivered non-food items and technical assistance to agricultural cooperatives, which conducted capacity assessments, developed improvement plans and provided training to local producers by facilitating experience exchanges.
- WFP provided capacity strengthening on emergency preparedness and response in a scenario of an earthquake in Santiago de Cuba. The activities were carried out within a United Nations Emergency Management Team workshop. The participants included the National Civil Defence, MINCEX, the Cuban Red Cross, the Fire Brigade, the National Centre for Seismological Research, and the Social Economic Group of the Provincial Defence Council of Santiago de Cuba.

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Country Strategic Plan (2021-2024)

| Total Requirement (in USD) | Allocated Contributions (in USD) | Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 55.9 million | 31.8 million | 0.6 million |

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Populations facing multiple hazards maintain access to food during and in the aftermath of disasters.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activity 1:

- Provide timely food assistance to shock-affected people while strengthening national and local capacity relevant to emergency preparedness and response.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Nutritionally vulnerable groups in targeted municipalities have improved nutrition status and more diversified and nutritious diets by 2024.

Focus area: Root causes

Activity 2:

- Provide nutritious food to nutritionally vulnerable groups through social protection programmes and a social and behavioural change strategy that promotes healthy diets.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable groups benefit from local food systems that are more resilient with regard to the impact of climate change and more efficient social safety nets by 2024.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activity 3:

- Provide training, equipment and technical assistance to stakeholders of local food systems while ensuring a more diversified, stable and nutritious diet for school-age children and other nutritionally vulnerable groups.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 4: National and local authorities have strengthened capacities to manage inclusive, comprehensive and adaptive food and nutrition systems by 2024.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activity 4:

- Strengthen the capacity of national and local decision makers related to the management of social protection programmes and disaster and climate risk, food security and nutrition analysis and monitoring.

Donors

Canada, Cuba, ECHO, Federal Republic of Germany, French Republic, Republic of Cyprus, Republic of Korea, KOICA, Private Donors, the Italian Republic, the Russian Federation and Latter-day Saint Charities, Swiss Confederation, UN CERF, UN Funds and agencies.

Monitoring

- WFP monitored the direct supply of food implemented by the local cooperatives to the national school feeding programme and community canteens. The results showed that 20 cooperatives in 6 municipalities delivered food assistance to community canteens and schools.

Partnership

- WFP and the National Insurance Enterprise continued to engage in regular discussion for the implementation of the insurance modality "Insurance plus Resilient," launched for the first time in Cuba in February and aimed at reducing the impact of extreme climate events on food and nutritional security to protect local smallholder farmers.
- On 17 March, WFP officially acknowledged the donation of the French Republic of 98 mt of powdered milk to benefit 67,500 children under two in the eastern provinces. The participants at the official ceremony held in Havana included His Excellency the Ambassador of France, the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Investment and the Ministry of the Food Industry.

Challenges

- The socioeconomic crisis aggravated by the effects of climate change, the embargo and the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, especially on tourism and remittances, severely affected Cuba's economy, deepening its structural problems. Furthermore, the country's high dependence on imports and limited access to foreign currencies significantly reduced the availability of domestic and imported food commodities. Moreover, the monetary reform initiated in 2021 reduced food subsidies, pushing inflation higher than forecasted (40 percent from October 2021 to October 2022) and deepening the dual-currency inequality gap, leading to higher prices of basic goods and services and impacting households' vulnerability to food insecurity.
- Furthermore, low agricultural productivity, high post-harvest losses and limited access to international markets remain key challenges.

Future Plans

- WFP engaged in discussions with the Minister Labour and Social Protection, Minister of Domestic Trade and Minister of Economy and Planning to carry out a vulnerability analysis in four municipalities (in three western provinces) by the end of 2023. Furthermore, the vulnerability analysis will integrate the nutrition component through joint work with the Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology Institute. WFP aims to use the analysis to inform the implementation of food assistance through cash-based transfers.