Operational Context

Despite being an upper-middle-income country, Colombia faces a challenging food security situation. Concerning levels of food insecurity are shown among Colombian households, as some 30 percent (15.5 million) are food insecure. Also, the food security for the migrant population and host communities has deteriorated. According to WFP’s Food Security and Nutritional Assessment (Dec 2022), 1.3 million migrants are food insecure, equivalent to 52 percent of the total migrant population in Colombia. Improving food security and advancing the peace process are among the Government’s main priorities. Colombia also faces a complex humanitarian situation, exacerbated by multiple emergencies triggered by increasing violence from non-state armed groups (NSAGs), often overlapping with extreme weather events, a mixed migration crisis, economic shocks of high inflation and currency devaluation, as well as the pandemic’s residual impacts. Colombia’s 50-year-long armed conflict resulted in 7.8 million internally displaced people (IDPs), while the country has also been the largest host for migrants from Venezuela. Around 2.8 million are currently registered in Colombia. The country office’s strategy is aligned with the Government’s priorities on food security, humanitarian response, recovery, development, and capacity-strengthening to ultimately achieve Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 17. WFP has been present in Colombia since 1969.

WFP beneficiaries reached by Department in May 2023:

- **Population:** 11.1 million
- **Income Level:** Upper middle
- **2015 Human Development Index:** 88 out of 191
- **Chronic malnutrition:** 10.8%
- **2022 Chronic undernutrition:** 8.8%
- **2022 Child malnutrition:** 12.2%
- **Income inequality:** 31.2%
- **Poverty:** 25.9%
- **Unemployment:** 14.6%
- **HDI ranking:** 58
- **GDP growth:** 2.5%
- **Inflation:** 8.1%
- **2022 Life expectancy:** 76.2 years

In Numbers

- **639.41 mt** of food assistance distributed*
- **USD 1.7 m** cash-based transfers made*
- **USD 75 m** six months (June - November 2023) net funding requirements, representing 58 percent of total
- **315,610 people assisted** in May 2023
  - **48%** Women
  - **52%** Men
  - Preliminary figures

Operational Updates

- On 2 May, the Government and National Liberation Army (ELN) resumed peace talks in Cuba, focusing on a bilateral ceasefire, civil society participation in the peace process, and humanitarian actions. WFP is closely monitoring to assess any possible impacts on its operations.
- The upcoming El Niño phenomenon could put up to 1.5 million people at very high risk of severe food and nutrition insecurity due to reduced rainfall, water shortages and droughts, according to WFP’s food security assessment. Households depending on livestock and agriculture in Huila, Santander, La Guajira, Bolívar, Magdalena, Córdoba, Cesar and Chocó departments could be the most impacted.
- Due to funding constraints, WFP will gradually have to start closing some community kitchens over the coming months. WFP and its donors are discussing options to continue providing food to vulnerable people as best as possible.
- On 15 May, the Ministry of the Environment announced the beginning of the 2023 hurricane season, slightly in advance compared to the previous years. Specialized agencies expect a near-normal season of tropical storms to affect the entire Caribbean coastline.
- In May, WFP assisted 83,200 migrants with the intention to settle, Colombian returnees and host communities through cash-based transfers in 11 departments. Of these, 28,000 in-transit migrants and Colombian returnees received hot meals and 16,000 received ready-to-eat food rations in nine departments.
- WFP reached over 68,400 children through the National School Feeding Programme. Of those, 57,029 were Colombian children in La Guajira and 11,397 were migrant children.
- WFP assisted 69,700 people affected by conflict and weather-related events this month in Choco, Valle del Cauca, Antioquia, Norte de Santander, Caquetá, Cauca and Nariño. Most beneficiaries were displaced populations (71 percent) and nearly every second was Afro-descendent (40 percent).

*Preliminary figures

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Nearly 90 percent of 250 Indigenous Awá and Afro-descendent communities in Putumayo and Nariño have increased agricultural production for their household food consumption, while 59 percent improved their nutritional diversity.

WFP’s monitoring revealed that migrant populations have had to dedicate substantially more money to buy food, spending over half of their available resources (55 percent up from 47 percent in December 2022). WFP sees this trend continuing, given persistent food price inflation, which would leave these populations with reduced purchasing power.

**Challenges**

- WFP started taking operational measures that lead to significant unaddressed food needs and impede populations from transitioning to sustainable food security. Nearly 130,000 victims of displacement and over 35,000 people affected by disasters may not receive assistance.
- By September, the predicted peak of El Niño impacts, WFP may not have the resources to respond to any national emergency or displacement, despite local governments’ requests for assistance.

**Partnerships**

- Demonstrating increasing food needs, and realities on the ground of vulnerable populations, WFP conducted field visits with European donors to enhance visibility and advocacy for future funding.
- WFP is consolidating its emergency preparedness support to the government for a possible Nevado del Ruiz Volcano eruption. WFP leveraged its food security data to analyse the food needs of at-risk populations to solidify contingency plans.
- WFP piloted Digital Wallets for migrants in Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Bolivar, and Antioquia to support easier access to financial resources through digital transfers. This pilot is in partnership with Davivienda Bank in Colombia and under the Better Than Cash Alliance.
- On 30 May, WFP’s partnership with the Department of National Planning (DNP) culminated in the Household Social Registry, a vital instrument merging social protection data to better assist vulnerable populations and effectively allocate social spending.

**Donors**

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