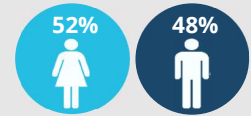


## WFP Mauritania Country Brief August 2023



## In Numbers



176,988 people assisted

5.7 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 1.8 million cash-based transfers made

US\$ 16.8 million six-month (September 2023-February 2024) net funding requirements

## Operational Context

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent drought cycles, resulting in the degradation of natural resources, and structurally impacting the population's productive capacity, resilience, and food security. According to the March 2023 Cadre Harmonisé, 472,275 individuals in 13 regions will face crisis conditions (Phase 3+) during the peak of the lean season (June-August 2023). This represents 13 percent of the population and reflects a decrease of 46 percent compared to March 2022.

Mauritania continues to host the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa. This year marks the tenth year of volatile security conditions in Mali resulting in a continuous refugee influx into Mauritania. As of July, there were 85,942 refugees registered by UNHCR in and around the Mbera camp.

WFP country portfolio aims to meet the basic food and nutrition needs of affected people as well as to provide UNHAS flight services for all humanitarian and development partners. In parallel, WFP strives to ensure the continuation of resilience programmes, while strengthening institutional capacity and minimising gender inequalities. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: 4.8 million

2021 Human Development Index: 158 out of 191

Income Level: Lower middle

Chronic malnutrition: 24.8 percent of children between 6-59 months

## Operational Updates

- **WFP's refugee response** in the Mbera camp: WFP will carry out the August distributions during the first week of September to refugees in groups 1, 2, and new arrivals. A total of 87,448 people (47,834 women) will receive cash transfers, 6,679 of whom are new arrivals (3,653 women). The cash ration is MRU 450 (USD 12) per person for group 1 and new arrivals, and MRU 300 for group 2. The in-kind/food portion of the assistance is intended for households in group 1 and new arrivals, with a planned quantity of 5 mt for 63,149 people (34,543 women). **To manage moderate acute malnutrition in the camp**, 586 children aged 6-59 months (280 girls) received specialised nutritious food in August. WFP also provided a morning porridge for the summer **school meals programme** to 1,933 primary school children (987 girls) enrolled in seven schools across the camp.

- **2023 lean season response:** WFP started the second round of lean season cash transfer distributions for the most vulnerable families located in the localities of Kaédi/Lexaiba, M'bout, and Ould Yengé and nutritional support through a cash top-up for the department of Ould Yengé. In total, WFP assisted 74,794 people with USD 997,669.

WFP provided cash-based transfers for the prevention of malnutrition among 182 children under two and 381 pregnant and breastfeeding women. WFP conducted awareness-raising and nutrition education sessions to guide the use of the cash top-up and improve mothers' knowledge of key family practices for infant and young child feeding.

- **Management of moderate acute malnutrition programme:** In August, 5,868 children aged 6-59 months (3,622 girls) and 1,401 pregnant and breastfeeding women received specialized nutritious food in 470 health centres in three resilience regions.
- **Food assistance for assets (FFA) programme:** WFP's innovative financing mechanism includes a debt-for-development swap with the Government of Spain, which is a financial tool designed to reduce the debt burden and channel pioneer funding toward FFA activities. As part of the debt swap programme, the Mauritanian Government, through its National Agency of the Great Green Wall, committed to allocating domestic resources towards mutually agreed development programmes such as a reforestation campaign covering a total area of 540 ha trees in the regions of Assaba and Hodh El Chargui in August.

**Capacity-strengthening:** WFP met with the National Food and Nutritional Crisis Response Mechanism (DCAN) coordination unit to establish a roadmap of capacity-strengthening actions to carry out until the end of the year, such as IT training and support for

## Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Total Requirements (US\$)	Total Received (US\$)
<b>286.5 million</b>	<b>186.7 million</b>
2023 Requirements (US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (September 2023 – February 2024)
<b>70.1 million</b>	<b>16.8 million</b>

### Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of a crisis

**Focus area:** *Crisis response*

#### Activities:

- Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and preventive nutrition ration and MAM treatment to refugees
- Provide food assistance and supplementary feeding to pandemic-affected populations/households

### Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Food-insecure populations, including school-age children, have access to adequate and nutritious food all year

**Focus area:** *Resilience-building*

#### Activities:

- Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment
- Provide school meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

### Strategic Result 3: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, have improved nutritional status all year.

**Focus area:** *Resilience-building*

#### Activities:

- MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls attending pre/post-natal care

### Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

**Strategic Outcome 4:** Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks in targeted areas have more resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems all year

**Focus area:** *Resilience-building*

#### Activities:

- Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural productive assets.

### Strategic Result 5: Country strategic capacities

**Strategic Outcome 5:** National institutions have strengthened capacities to manage food security, nutrition, and social protection policies and programmes, including an adaptive (shock-responsive) social protection system, by 2030.

**Focus area:** *Resilience-building*

#### Activities:

- Provide training and technical support to governmental institutions

### Strategic Result 6: Global partnership support

**Strategic Outcome 6:** Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year

**Focus area:** *Resilience-building*

#### Activities:

- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners for humanitarian interventions
- Provide on-demand logistics services to Government, United Nations, and Non-Governmental partners to facilitate effective field operations (CPA Service Provision and platform activities)

the forthcoming retreat to reflect on the results of the DCAN. The roadmap will also include an action plan for visibility activities.

- **The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** transported 103 passengers and 1,503 kg of cargo, connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa, Nema, and Bassikounou through 25 in-country rotations. Due to funding shortages, UNHAS has reduced the number of flight rotations from three to two per week since the beginning of August. This measure will enable UNHAS to maintain its operations until December 2023, after which the service will have to be discontinued unless further funding is received.
- **Gender:** WFP has started bi-monthly gender meetings with gender and protection focal points of cooperating partners. The meetings are held to analyze situations, developments, and monitor gender-related activities in the field, share information, etc.

## Monitoring

- WFP is currently participating, alongside the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, and other relevant institutions, in a joint mid-term mission to **monitor the agricultural and pastoral seasons** and identify risk factors (flood, drought, and phyto-sanitarian). This exercise is in preparation for the November 2023 *Cadre Harmonisé* and will help to identify the areas at risk for the 2024 lean season planning to enable humanitarian partners to prioritize their assistance in advance.
- Despite some stations having rainfall deficits or surpluses, **the drought index is very high in the rainfed zone** and there is a 59 percent failure rate for sowing in all the departments across the country's weather stations. As a result, **rainfed crops are likely to be adversely affected**, despite the good rainfall forecast for September.

## Challenges

- Starting in November 2023, **WFP will no longer have the financial resources to provide food assistance (in the form of cash and in-kind)** to the most vulnerable refugee households in the Mbera camp and will be forced to halt the assistance. WFP understands the difficult conditions in which refugees live **and will continue to advocate with donors to mobilize the necessary resources to resume distributions as soon as possible** with the support of UNHCR and other partners. WFP is also **seeking funding to introduce development programmes and strengthen the self-reliance** of the refugee population.

## Donors

Donors to WFP Mauritania CSP 2019 – 2023 include Andorra, Canada, the European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Mauritania, Monaco, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Additional support was provided by private donors, African Risk Capacity Replica, UN Adaptation Funds, UN Central Emergency Response Fund, UN Peacebuilding Fund, UN Sustainable Development Goal Fund, UNICEF, and UNHCR.