



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

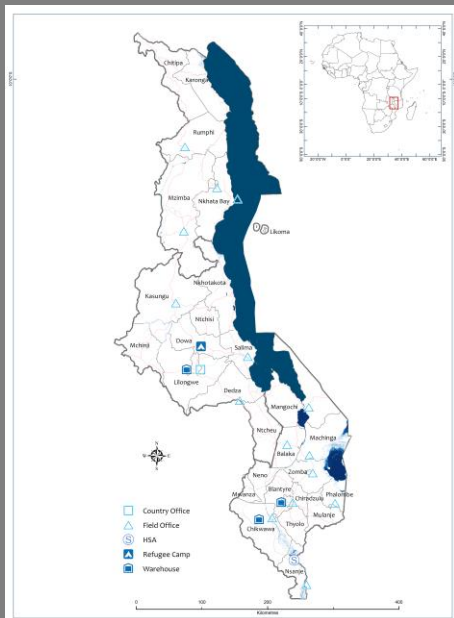
# WFP Malawi Country Brief January 2025



## Operational Context

Malawi is a small landlocked country in Sub-Saharan Africa with a population expanding rapidly at 3 percent per year. With most livelihoods dependent on rainfed agriculture, the population is highly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters, especially drought and cyclone-induced floods.

Malawi's challenges are compounded by weak economic growth, high overall debt distress, low primary school completion (51 percent), a high prevalence of stunting and high prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection (8.8 percent). WFP supports the Government for a food and nutrition secure and resilient future, guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). WFP has been present in Malawi since 1965. The country is facing a food security crisis because of *El Niño*-induced dry spells that damaged 44 percent of the national crop area.



Population: est. 20 million

2022 Human Development Index: 169  
out of 191 countries

Income Level: Low

Stunting: 35 percent of children aged  
6-59 months old

## In Numbers

31,026 mt of maize distributed for *El Niño* response

USD 1.8 million in cash-based transfers distributed for *El Niño* response

1.5 million people assisted for *El Niño* response

14.3 million six-month net funding requirements (February – July 2025) representing 27 percent of total requirements

## Operational Updates

***El Niño* Response:** WFP continues distributing food to support the Government of Malawi in addressing acute food shortages. So far, 31,000 metric tonnes of maize have been distributed to 1.5 million people.

**Refugees:** WFP continues providing critical cash-based transfers to refugees and asylum seekers in Dzaleka Refugee camp to purchase food. Due to logistical delays, the January contributions took place the first week of February. The number of refugees has increased to over 56,000, with numbers continuing to rise. Due to funding shortfalls, WFP has had to reduce the ration from 75 to 50 percent of monthly food needs starting from February 2025. Immediate funding is critical to ensure continued assistance for those in need. Additionally, WFP supported Mozambican asylum seekers with food assistance, providing 3,500 households in Nsanje with emergency cash transfers amounting to USD 49,971 as well as distributing 87.5 mt of maize.

**Nutrition:** Data shows a sharp rise in malnutrition, with severe cases increasing by 23 percent from December 2023 (3,050) to December 2024 (3,762), and moderate cases surging by 178 percent from 1,358 to 3,782. WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, continues providing Super Cereal Plus to treat moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in children aged 6-59 months. The programme has been expanded to include pregnant and breastfeeding women in seven districts as well as people living with HIV and tuberculosis patients in four districts. Since September 2024, 13,162 children have been treated for MAM in four districts.

**School Meals:** As part of the *El Niño* emergency response, WFP is distributing take-home rations to 89,000 learners and their families in 93 schools. Additionally, WFP continues to provide emergency hot meals to over 256,000 students in 199 schools until March 2025. Besides the emergency response, the overall Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has provided daily hot meals to 712,574 learners in January 2025.

**Livelihoods:** Under WFP's integrated resilience programme, the final crop insurance cash distributions for the 2024/25 season have been completed in Balaka, Machinga, and Zomba. A total of MWK 8,360,200 was distributed to 457 beneficiaries who experienced yield losses due to adverse conditions. These payouts support immediate household needs, agricultural recovery, and economic stability, reinforcing resilience in the face of recurring shocks. With this, the 2024/25 payout cycle is officially concluded.

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Cover photo: Beneficiaries at a food distribution point in Balaka District. © WFP/Francis Thawani.

Country Strategic Plan (2024-2028)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
69 m	20.5 m	14.3 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs.

**Focus area:** Crisis Response

**Activity 1:** Provide food assistance, nutrition, and livelihood support to populations in anticipation of and response to seasonal or other shocks, leveraging national social protection systems where possible.

**Activity 2:** Provide food and nutrition assistance, services and livelihood support to refugees, asylum seekers and host communities.

Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 2:** People have better nutrition, health & education.

**Focus area:** Root Causes

**Activity 3.** Promote optimal nutrition practices and strengthen partnerships with food system actors to increase availability and utilisation of diversified nutrient dense foods.

**Activity 4.** Promote the provision of safe, nutritious, and diversified meals to pre and primary school children delivered in an integrated, inclusive and gender responsive environment, and linked to local production and markets

Strategic Result 3: Sustainable Food Systems

**Strategic Outcome 3:** People have improved & sustainable livelihoods.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**Activity 5:** Provide an integrated package of climate and nutrition-sensitive resilience and livelihoods building support to households and communities, particularly smallholder farmers and value chain actors.

Strategic Result 4: Capacity Strengthening

**Strategic Outcome 4: National programmes & systems are strengthened.**

**Focus area:** Resilience Building

**Activity 6.** Provide technical support to national and sub-national actors for resilient food systems, emergency preparedness and response, health, and supply chain systems.

**Activity 7.** Provide technical expertise and targeted systems and capacities to national and local actors involved in food and nutrition security, social protection, education, health, disaster risk management, anticipatory action and emergency preparedness and response aimed at building government-led, sustainable, scalable national systems.

Strategic Result 5: Enhance Global Partnerships

**Strategic Outcome 5:** Humanitarian & development actors are more efficient & effective.

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Activity 8.** Provide services through the Logistics Cluster to the National Disaster Management Agency and humanitarian and development partners to enhance logistics coordination and supply chain management.

**Activity 9.** Provide effective and efficient access to on-demand services to Government, humanitarian, and development actors to augment their capacity to ensure more effective and efficient interventions.

**Food Systems:** The Government of Japan has contributed USD 1 million to support a sesame export promotion project in Malawi. This funding will strengthen the Malawi Bureau of Standards' capacity to enforce quality standards for sesame exports, enabling smallholder farmers to access higher-value markets, increase their incomes, and improve their livelihoods. Additionally, WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and LUANAR's CARD, is finalising a Value Chain and Market System Analysis for sesame, cowpeas, and sorghum. Insights from this analysis will help shape policies and interventions that strengthen market linkages for smallholder farmers.

**Health Supply Chain:** This month, WFP continued supporting supply chain dashboards and decision-making processes to enhance efficiency and data-driven planning. In January, the antibiotics team updated the dashboard, marking a key step towards sustainability and strengthening national capacity in health supply chain management. As part of the Africa CDC Saving Lives and Livelihoods project, WFP joined the kick-off workshop and reviewed the workplan to support the Ministry of Health's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI). This collaboration aims to improve vaccine distribution and access, strengthening Malawi's immunisation efforts.

**Emergency Preparedness and Response:** To strengthen flood emergency response, WFP supported the National Search and Rescue (SAR) Cluster in training boat operators for the cyclone season through on-the-water exercises and preparedness drills. Throughout January, over 50 government boat operators participated in SAR readiness activities at the Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA) in Bangula, Nsanje District, where WFP manages a fleet of boats prepositioned on the Shire River.

**Transport and Logistics Cluster:** As co-lead of the transport and logistics cluster, WFP is supporting the Government in transporting maize for the *El Niño* emergency response. In January, WFP transported 2,410 mt of maize from the national Strategic Grain Reserve to affected communities on behalf of the Government. So far, this lean season, WFP has supported the government with transportation of 18,546 mt of government maize.

**On Demand Services:** WFP and the Government of Malawi have signed an agreement to import 48,000 metric tons of maize, valued at US\$ 35 million and funded by the World Bank Group, to address emergency food needs in the country. WFP will procure and transport the maize from Tanzania to Malawi to meet emergency food needs following the *El Niño* drought. The Government of Malawi will distribute the food to approximately 954,000 households for two months.

Challenges

WFP faces a funding gap of USD 14.3 million for February to July 2025.

Donors

Adaptation Fund, Canada, Denmark, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, European Union International Partnerships, France, Germany, Government of Flanders, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Jesus Christ Church of Latter Day Saints, Malawi, Multilateral Funds, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Takeda, United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), United States Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID BHA), and WFP's Emerging Donors Matching Fund (in alphabetical order).