



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Zambia Country Brief MAY 2025

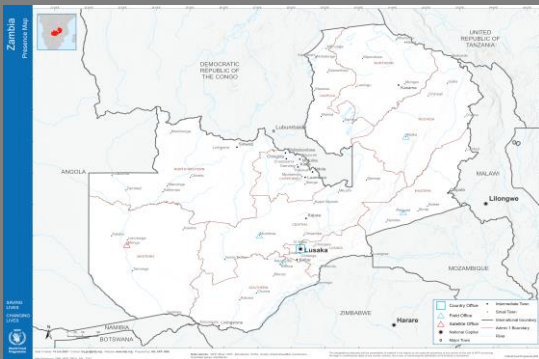


Operational Context

In 2022, the World Bank reclassified Zambia as a low-income country after a decade in the lower middle-income category. The reclassification followed sustained poor economic performance exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. More than half of the country's 19.6 million people live below the poverty line. The country continues to grapple with a high debt burden, posing a significant threat to the Government's efforts to deliver social services, alleviate poverty, and achieve zero hunger.

In the last decade, Zambia has suffered from the impact of climate change, with frequent, prolonged dry spells (the most recent being the 2023/2024 El Niño-induced drought), extreme high temperatures, and floods that have undermined food security and threatened the livelihoods of many smallholder farming households. Smallholders are the country's largest population of food producers, responsible for up to 90 percent of the food produced in Zambia.

As part of the Zambia United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2023 – 2028, WFP provides technical assistance to the Government to strengthen national systems and programmes that aim to achieve zero hunger. This includes integrated nutrition programmes, smallholder farmer support, social protection programmes and disaster risk management, as well as providing food assistance to vulnerable individuals and populations, including refugees, and offering on-demand logistics support during emergencies.



Population: **19.6 million**

2022 Human Development Index: **153 out of 193 countries**

Income Level: **Low**

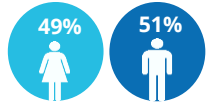
Stunting: **32 percent of children aged 6–59 months**

In Numbers

USD 1 million in vouchers to beneficiaries in May 2025

USD3.5 million six-month net funding requirements (June 2025 - November 2025) representing 34 percent of total needs.

104,015 people assisted in May 2025



Operational Updates

In May, WFP assisted 104,015 people, including 50,668 drought-affected individuals and refugees through crisis response (cash-based transfers and food distributions), 13,082 people through nutrition improvement interventions, 40,230 individuals through smallholder farmer support and resilience interventions and 35 people who participated in capacity strengthening training.

Crisis response/refugees

Food assistance for refugees: WFP continues to provide cash-based transfers to refugees and asylum seekers at the Mantapala refugee settlement. In May, WFP assisted 9,263 refugees.

Strengthened Livelihoods and Building Self-Reliance (SLABS) of Refugees in Mantapala

Community seed bank deposits: Following the commencement of the 2025 harvest season, beneficiaries of the SLABS project have started depositing the seeds in the bank to be planted in the upcoming farming season. As at end of May 2025, 300kgs of maize and 550 kgs of beans had been deposited in the bank. The numbers are expected to rise as SHFs continue to harvest.

Organic Vegetable Production Refresher Training for Lead Farmers:

In preparation for the establishment of gardens at the 10 mechanized water points, WFP in collaboration with Africa Action Help International (AAH) conducted refresher trainings in vegetable production for lead farmers. The sessions were attended by 47 participants (23 male and 24 female). The purpose of the training was to promote sustainable and environmentally friendly practices in vegetable production, improve soil health and biodiversity, and increase farm profitability. Key topics covered included land preparation, nursery management, and transplanting. Beneficiaries at the water sites will be supported with drip lines for garden irrigation.

Crisis response/drought

In May, WFP completed last-mile distributions under the drought response in 4 districts (Itezhi Tezhi, Lukulu, Nalolo, and Senanga), reaching a total of 41,405 people through voucher assistance. These distributions helped close remaining gaps among households that were previously missed due to access constraints. WFP's efforts addressed urgent food needs while also supporting local markets and retailers. As planned, the crisis response is now nearing its conclusion, with operations gradually winding down.

Photo: Nsumbi Mutembo a Smallholder farmer and beneficiary of the SLABS project in Mantapala refugee settlement shows his harvest. Photo: WFP/NkoleMwape

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Country Strategic Plan (2023–2028)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirement (in USD)
177.7 m	90.4 m	3.5 m

Strategic Result 1: Access to food (SDG Target 2.1)

Strategic Outcome 01: Food-insecure people in Zambia (including refugees) affected by shocks are better able to meet their essential food security and nutrition needs in anticipation of, during and in the aftermath of crises.

Focus Area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide food and livelihood support to crisis-affected, food-insecure people, including refugees, to meet their basic food and nutrition needs, and support self-reliance in anticipation of, during and in the early aftermath of shocks including climate change induced impacts

Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition (SDG Target 2.2)

Strategic Outcome 02: Populations at risk of malnutrition in Zambia have improved access to and consumption of safe and diverse nutrient-dense food all year round.

Focus Area: Root causes

Activities:

- Promote adoption of optimal nutrition practices among populations at risk of malnutrition and strengthen partnership with food system actors to increase the availability of nutrient-dense foods.

Strategic Result 3: Smallholder productivity and incomes (SDG Target 2.3)

Strategic Outcome 03: Food-insecure and risk-prone smallholder farming populations, especially women, youth, and people with disabilities in targeted rural and urban areas, are enabled to withstand climate change and other shocks and benefit from more resilient food systems through increased incomes that contribute to improved nutrition and food diversity and increased economic and livelihood opportunities by 2030.

Focus Area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Promote knowledge and adoption of climate services, regenerative agriculture practices and innovative technologies among smallholders and nutritious food value chain actors to build resilience with regard to climate change and other shocks while simultaneously reducing environmental degradation.
- Provide targeted smallholders and value chain actors with an integrated package of innovative and transformative skills, tools and systems to enable the adoption of diversified and decent livelihoods

Strategic Result 4: Capacity Building (SDG Target 17.9)

Strategic Outcome 04: National institutions in Zambia have strengthened capacity to design policies and programmes that promote the enhancement of national food systems and deliver national emergency preparedness, anticipatory and response programmes, nutrition-sensitive, shock-responsive social protection, supply chain systems and sustainable food security programmes by 2030.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance, including through South–South and triangular cooperation, to national institutions to strengthen national capacity and systems for emergency preparedness, anticipatory action and early response, social protection, food and nutrition security and sustainable food systems.

Strategic Result 5: Global Partnership (SDG Target 17.16)

Strategic Outcome 05: Humanitarian and development actors in Zambia have improved access to on-demand services and benefit from innovative, effective, and cost-efficient supply chain capacity by 2030.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide timely and appropriate on-demand services for supply chain, innovation, and health logistics services to relevant actors

Nutrition improvement support

Nutrition Integration: WFP conducted a series of nutrition-themed trainings at the Mantapala refugee settlement. These trainings included nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, discussions on gender and nutrition, and growth monitoring sessions. A total of 138 men, 192 women, and 96 children under five participated in these activities, which included pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and youth. During the trainings, growth monitoring was carried out for children under five, revealing that among the 96 children assessed, 3 were severely malnourished, 15 had acute malnutrition, and 78 were considered well-nourished.

Nutrition Policy support: WFP provided financial and technical support to the National Food and Nutrition Commission as part of its Country Capacity Strengthening efforts. This support helped finalise the National Food and Nutrition Policy and develop the Implementation Plan through a meeting aimed at consolidating stakeholder comments. Throughout this process, WFP advocated for the inclusion of key policy strategies, such as the school feeding program, within the nutrition policy.

Smallholder Farmer Support

Rural Resilience (R4) Project Close-Out: WFP Zambia officially concluded the R4 project (2014–2025) across six districts. During a field mission, the project's closure documented achievements and facilitated the seamless integration of R4 interventions into national government and partner programmes. Key achievements of the R4 project included increased adoption of Conservation Agriculture (CA) from 15.2 to 23 percent with 87 percent crop rotation, boosted financial inclusion with access to input credit rising from less than 2 to 24 percent and 55 percent growth in household income through Village Savings and Lending Associations, improved post-harvest management, enhanced climate information services, and strengthened private sector collaborations among others SeedCo, Mayfair, Kickstart. Next steps involve embedding R4 practices into government systems, linking savings groups to formal financial institutions, strengthening market access and climate information systems, finalising asset handovers, sustaining private sector partnerships, and advocating for supportive policies.

Capacity Strengthening

To enhance the operational effectiveness of social protection programmes in the country, WFP supported a workshop to review and validate the Systems Design Document for the Single Window Management Information System (SWMIS). Once developed and operational by end of the third quarter of 2025, the SWMIS will serve as a decentralized case management system that integrates referrals, beneficiary management, coordinated service delivery, and accountability at both national and community levels. The workshop, held in Lusaka, provided an opportunity for thirty-five (35) government and UN programme staff to share feedback to guide the development of the SWMIS aligning with government desired plans.

Donors: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the European Commission, the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Russia, United Nations Children's Fund, United States of America, World Health Organisation, The Government of Zambia,