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WFP Zambia Country Brief

December 2025



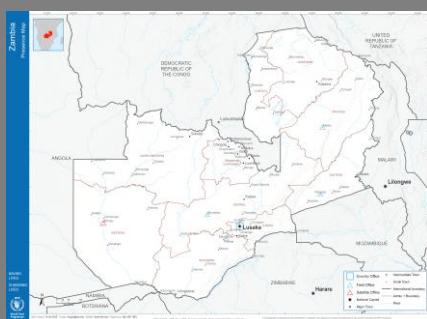
Operational Context

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.

WFP has been present in Zambia since 1967, providing food assistance and strengthening the capacity of the Government in addressing people's food and nutrition needs.



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 71,876 in cash-based transfers to beneficiaries in December 2025

210,407 people assisted in December 2025

USD 3.7 million six-month net funding requirements (January 2026 - June 2026).

Strategic Updates

- **Refugee Response:** In Mantapala Settlement, 9,314 refugees received cash-based support totalling USD 71,876, enabling households to meet essential food needs and maintain dietary diversity.
- **Anticipatory Action:** WFP scaled up anticipatory action to strengthen national climate preparedness. Working with the Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD) and the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), it enhanced technical capacity through training and blended rainfall forecast analysis, improving early warning systems. The release of the 2025/2026 seasonal forecast, paired with tailored agricultural advisories for drought- and flood-prone districts, gave communities and decision-makers actionable guidance ahead of potential shocks.
- **Lean Season Support:** In response to the 2024/2025 El Niño drought, WFP distributed drought-tolerant inputs to 151,185 beneficiaries (30,237 households) across Eastern, Luapula and Southern Province, funded by CERF, KfW, and LDS. The inputs included cowpeas, groundnuts, sorghum, various vegetable seeds, and cuttings of sweet potato and cassava. Additionally, WFP distributed commodity vouchers worth USD 113,300 to 4,345 beneficiaries in Gwembe District to improve food security for drought-affected, vulnerable households.
- **Strengthening District-Level Nutrition Governance:** In collaboration with the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC), WFP supported the establishment and orientation of 12 District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs) across ELSAM, ESIRN, and TERNIZA projects supported districts, engaging 193 members (91 women and 102 men). To reinforce these efforts, WFP and NFNC conducted review meetings in five districts, bringing together 70 staff (29 women and 41 men) to assess progress and strengthen coordination. As the backbone of decentralized nutrition governance, DNCCs bring together actors from health, agriculture, education, and social protection to jointly plan, implement, and monitor integrated interventions. Through this multisectoral engagement, districts are better positioned to improve accountability, enhance service delivery, and translate national nutrition policies into practical, localized strategies. Orientation activities will continue in the first quarter of 2026.
- **Advancing Zambia's Stunting Reduction Strategy Through Multi-Sectoral Approaches:** WFP continued to provide technical support to the Government of Zambia in advancing the national stunting reduction agenda. In December 2025, the Office of the Vice President, through the Permanent Secretary, convened a multi-stakeholder meeting to explore complementary models for stunting reduction beyond the current health-centric approaches. The discussion focused on expanding the range of interventions to better address the underlying drivers of malnutrition.

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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	106.7 m	3.7 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

• Through this process, WFP positioned itself as a key partner by sharing resilience-focused models that integrate nutrition-sensitive approaches. These include social protection interventions such as Home-Grown School Meals (HGSM), fortification initiatives linked to resilience programmes, and other scalable solutions that strengthen food systems while improving nutrition outcomes. By leveraging its technical expertise, WFP aims to provide the Government with evidence-based options to reduce stunting and strengthen human capital development.

• **Russia Donates USD2 Million Worth of Food Aid to Zambia:**

The Government of the Russian Federation donated USD 2 million worth of yellow split peas and vegetable oil to support Zambia's preparedness for the 2025/2026 lean season, in a ceremony attended by Vice President Dr. W.K. Mutale Nalumango and Russian Ambassador Azim Yarakhmedov. The contribution, combined with Government-supplied cereals, will form an emergency food basket pre-positioned for distribution in high-risk districts in line with the National Multi-Hazard Contingency Plan implemented through the DMMU, with the aim of delivering timely assistance to a targeted 129,450 people across 64 districts amid ongoing climate-related risks. The donated items will be distributed to vulnerable communities during the peak of the lean season by DMMU with technical support from WFP.

• **Scaling Up Nutrition and School Feeding Initiatives:** In

December, WFP supported the design of the Milk for Schools initiative, targeting 200,000 early childhood education (ECE) learners. The programme aims to improve child nutrition and learning outcomes while strengthening market linkages for local dairy producers. The design process prioritized alignment with national school health and nutrition priorities, ensuring feasibility, sustainability, and complementarity with the Government's Home-Grown School Meals (HGSM) Programme.

- To further enhance dietary diversity and promote climate resilience, WFP facilitated the installation of climate-smart school gardens in 32 schools across Chongwe, Kafue, Lusaka, Mazabuka, Kasenengwa, Chipata, and Chisamba districts, through funding support from Finland. These gardens will improve access to nutritious foods for school meals and serve as practical learning platforms for climate-smart agriculture and environmental stewardship.
- Additionally, WFP continued its technical support to the Ministry of Education in expanding HGSM to 10 new districts, achieving nationwide coverage across all 116 districts. This milestone represents a significant step toward universal school meal access and reinforces Government ownership of the programme.

Donors: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the European Commission, the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, The People's Republic of China, Private donors, Russia, United Nations Children's Fund, United States of America, UN-CERF, WHO, and The Government of Zambia.