



WFP COVID-19

Situation Report #03

20 March 2020

9 million children across 37 countries are currently being affected due to school closures impacting WFP School Feeding programmes

71 out of 87 countries with WFP operations have reported cases

3 WFP employees have been embedded in the recently established **Interagency Supply Chain Coordination Cell in Geneva** led by WHO

WFP Business Continuity

- WFP is first and foremost committed to the safety and security of its employees across the globe. Measures have been taken throughout the organization to ensure proper protocols are followed with business continuity plans in place to ensure operations are at the same time being sustained.
- The UNHRD hubs are supporting WFP's efforts to protect employees by storing and dispatching over USD 2 million worth of office hygiene items to an estimated 50 prioritized Country Offices. UNHRD is also monitoring the market for key logistics items, forecasting supply and demand, and working closely with suppliers to mitigate any gaps.
- Business Continuity Plans are in place across the organization. Regional Bureaus and Country Offices are now testing and implementing plans. Given the current situation in Italy, WFP HQ has extended the reduction of office-based employees through 03 April 2020.
- WFP needs to procure and pre-position a three-month-stock of food in or near countries most vulnerable to pandemic-induced supply chain disruptions to ensure ongoing operations are delivering at full capacity. A letter has been sent to member states asking donor partners to urgently confirm contributions already under negotiation.
- WFP has submitted inputs to the OCHA-led humanitarian appeal for the COVID-19 Pandemic Global Response Plan. Activities focus on the expansion and addition of common services, assets and infrastructures. This includes the establishment and management of designated international staging hubs, facilitation of weekly cargo airlifts, ocean transport services and scheduled passenger services, which will be established to facilitate critical movement of humanitarians. WFP's requirements are estimated at USD 104 million.
- WFP's strength in gathering price and market information at the local level will be drawn upon information will be transparently disseminated to all partners. WFP is currently setting up or strengthening remote data collection schemes in priority countries to collect information at community and household level. In addition, WFP conducted a survey of its food suppliers last week to ascertain what impact COVID-19 has had on their operations. Most indicated no significant impact to date apart from possible delays due to unforeseen changes in shipping plans. However, rice has seen a sudden increase in local demand first in China, South East Asia, and now in Europe. In rice producing regions (Thailand, Vietnam and Myanmar) sharp price increases have occurred over the past month of around 10-15 percent. If labour decreases due to the spread of COVID-19, there could be a drop in production and further exportation restrictions.

WFP Response

- WFP is working to sustain operations supporting 87 million people, reducing reliance on negative coping mechanisms, helping to reassure and stabilize populations, closely monitoring potential changes in needs to adapt, preposition, prepare and scale up where needed. Thirteen employees have already been deployed to the key corridors to support Country Offices and Regional Bureaus. Country Offices are currently analysing programme criticality in order to best support the most vulnerable populations. In addition, guidance has been developed and disseminated to support employees on how to operate in the COVID-19 environment.
- WFP GIS has developed a live Dashboard, visualizing key travel restrictions data from the International Air Traffic Association.

Supply Chain Continuity

- Pre-emptive measures to contain the virus are in place such as border closures, suspension of services and movement restrictions. WFP is monitoring these disruptions at a global level, carefully assessing potential knock-on effects on WFP's own supply chain. At the moment, movement restrictions seem to be limited to passengers and do not include cargoes – WFP is actively engaging with local authorities to exempt humanitarian cargoes from the restrictions, where possible. Alternatively, WFP is exploring alternative logistics routes and entry points as a contingency plan.
- The COVID-19 outbreak has disrupted world trade and caused large parts of the normal flow to collapse. The lack of exports from China have caused empty containers to be stranded in the country. Despite Chinese exports picking up since last week, there continue to be large shortages in container equipment to accommodate exports from the US and Europe, also impacting WFP's supply chain.
- According to shipping industry reports, in order to help alleviate this issue, shipping company MSC will deploy two of its largest vessels purely to reposition empty container equipment from the Far East to Northern Europe and the US West Coast.

- In Syria, the operation has experienced the delay of approximately two weeks in the delivery of 700 containers due to COVID-19 related factors. This is not expected to affect the pipeline, but discussions are underway about future shipments.
- WFP Aviation expects costs for air operations to increase due to the COVID-19 outbreak, mainly due to limitations of aircraft crew to rotate. A few countries (Nigeria, DRC, Chad, C.A.R., Jordan) are requiring all incoming passengers to quarantine – in some cases these quarantines have affected UNHAS operations directly as they can limit availability of crews. WFP Aviation is following up with local and civil aviation authorities where appropriate to ease these requirements for humanitarian flights.

Common Services

- Since the outbreak began, WFP, through its Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD), has supported partners, including WHO, to dispatch over 85 consignments to 74 countries to assist their COVID-19 responses; these shipments included USD 1.4 million worth of personal protection equipment items, health kits and other key support items. UNHRD is also supporting multiple partners, donors and governments to procure and transport urgently needed items to hotspots including China, Iran, and the Pacific Islands.

Impact on WFP School Feeding Programmes

As national governments implement localized and nationwide school closures, school feeding programmes have halted – from Armenia, to Mauritania, to Colombia where WFP supports the most vulnerable migrant and indigenous children. Preliminary estimates indicate that 37 countries where WFP carries out school feeding activities are affected with **9 million children not receiving school meals** (based on 2019 data).

- On 14 March, the Government of Burkina Faso announced the closure of schools and universities until 31 March to respond to the expansion of COVID-19. The suspension of all school activities will halt all school feeding-related activities implemented by WFP, affecting more than 40,000 pupils.
- The Colombia Country Office has reported significant disruption to the operation of 35 community kitchens, which represent over 45 percent of people receiving emergency assistance.

WFP is doing everything it can to minimize the effects on these programmes and evaluating possible alternatives. This includes providing take-home rations in lieu of the meals, home delivery of food and provision of cash or vouchers. In Somalia, WFP continues to advocate for beneficiaries to move to phone/online shopping to reduce movements – 40,000 users are currently using this system successfully.

Contacts

For more information, please contact the WFP COVID-19 Coordination Cell: global.ncov2019@wfp.org