

Highlights

WFP has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2020 for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict. The [announcement](#) noted WFP's impressive ability to intensify its efforts faced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Where there is conflict, there is hunger. And where there is hunger, there is often conflict.

Today is a reminder that food security, peace and stability go together.

Without peace, we cannot achieve our global goal of zero hunger; and while there is hunger, we will never have a peaceful world."

- WFP Executive Director David Beasley



The number of newly reported COVID-19 cases is growing faster than ever. More than 37 million confirmed cases and over 1 million deaths have been reported worldwide to WHO. Global extreme poverty is expected to rise in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years as COVID-19 compounds conflict and climate change, adding as many as 150 million extreme poor by 2021 according to the World Bank's [Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report](#).

WFP has published a September [update to its Global Response to COVID-19 plan](#). The update describes how COVID-19 has compounded threats to food security, how generous donor support has enabled WFP to step up to respond to the immense challenges posed by the pandemic, and how WFP is working to build back better and ensure its assistance has a sustainable impact. Since the onset of the pandemic, WFP's needs have grown considerably and are outpacing available funding. **To meet needs over the next six months until March 2021, US\$ 5.1 billion is required.**

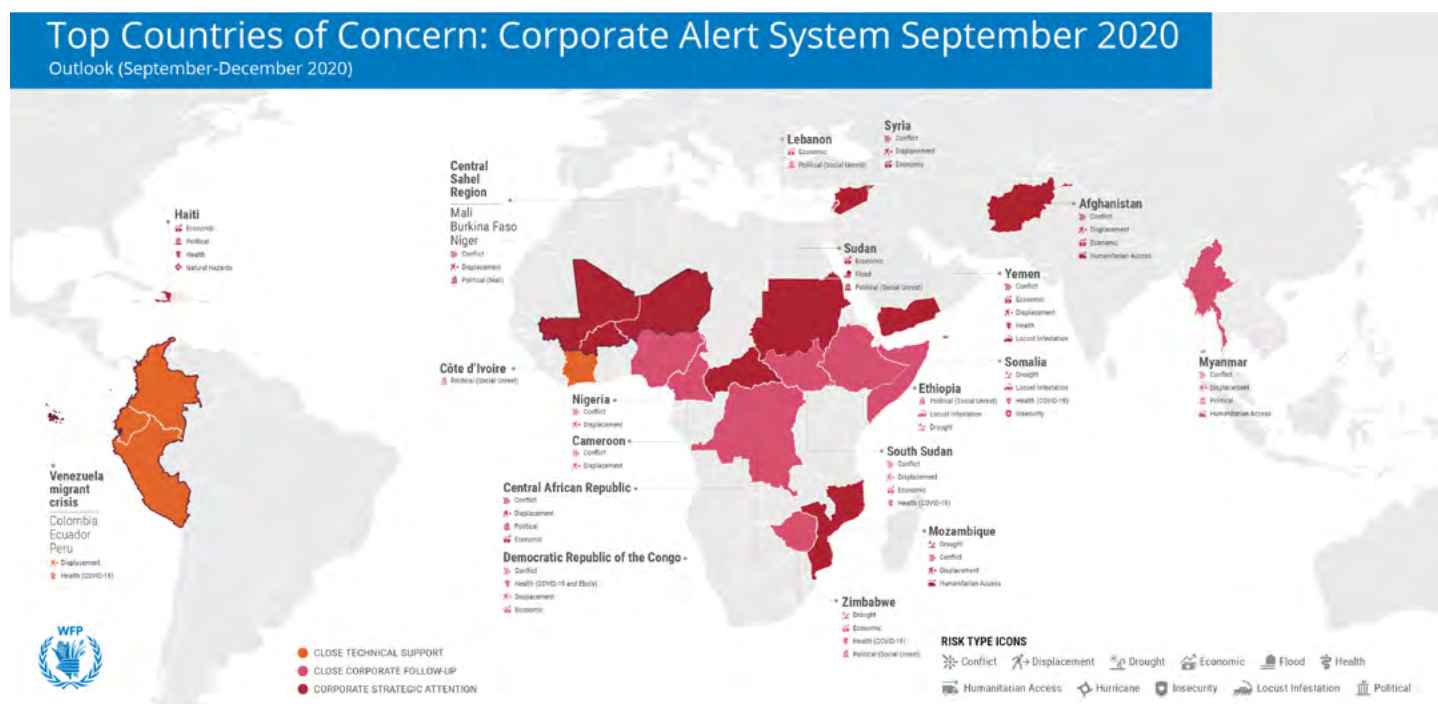
The third [Progress Report for the Global Humanitarian Response Plan \(GHRP\) for COVID-19](#) has been published. While humanitarian organizations are grateful for the money they have received, funding to date is less than 30 percent of the US\$ 10 billion required. Acknowledging that the pandemic will continue to have an impact far into 2021, COVID-19 analyses and programming will be integrated into 'regular' humanitarian needs overviews and response plans for 2021.

A growing improvement of the commercial airfreight market as well as more available supply of health items and a clearer idea of remaining cargo requirements has led WFP to begin discussions with partners on a **gradual phase-out of WFP's free-to-user cargo services over the next two months**. To-date, over 77,000 m3 of cargo has been dispatched on behalf of 62 organizations to 169 countries – enough cargo to fill over 30 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Top Countries of Concern as per WFP's Corporate Alert System, September 2020

A new edition of the Corporate Alert System (CAS) has been published. Emerging data from the latest analysis shows that COVID-19 has had a compounding effect on pre-existing vulnerabilities and stressors. Countries of high operational concern requiring corporate strategic attention are the Central Sahel region (**Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger**), **Central African Republic, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Lebanon**, and **Sudan**. Countries of close corporate follow-up are **Nigeria, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Iraq, Mozambique** and **Myanmar**.



Asia and the Pacific: The number of COVID-19 cases in Asia and the Pacific countries of WFP operation (including oversight countries) now exceeds 8.6 million, making it the WFP region with the highest number of cases. **India** accounts for 80 percent of the caseload with over 7.1 million confirmed cases. COVID-19 is compounding the risks already faced in many parts of the region due to escalating conflict and climate change; preparations for heavy rain and the upcoming winter are even more difficult than usual and funding is stretched for critical operations such as **Myanmar** and **Afghanistan**.

East Africa: The number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase in the region, reaching 153,000 confirmed cases. WFP estimates the number of acutely food insecure people in the region could increase by 73 percent – from 24 million pre-COVID-19, to 41.5 million before the end of 2020. In response, WFP aims to assist 3.9 million additional people affected by the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Funding shortfalls continue to force ration cuts by up to 30 percent for over 2.7 million refugees in **Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan** and **Djibouti**.

Latin America and the Caribbean: The region continues to grapple with over 2.5 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic, tropical storms and deteriorating political developments. At least 4 million people need urgent food assistance in **Haiti**; WFP is scaling up to reach up to 1.3 million people with food and cash, has restarted its school feeding activities as the COVID-19 lockdown lifts, is providing logistics support to the entire humanitarian community and is supporting the government in developing a national social protection policy.

Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa: The region has passed 2.1 million confirmed COVID-19 cases; WFP is continuing to sustain livelihood operations, provide support to social protection programmes, and monitor the reopening of schools to resume school feeding activities. Cash-based transfers remain a key assistance mechanism in response to COVID-19; in **Egypt**, WFP completed its third and last cycle of emergency support, targeting 50,000 casual workers with EGP 500 (US\$32) in monthly cash assistance.

Southern Africa: The pandemic is exacerbating food insecurity in the region, which is set to further deteriorate. WFP projects that some 42 million people will need food assistance in the next 12 months in the 12 countries where WFP operates in the region. WFP is [extremely concerned](#) about the escalating conflict and deteriorating food security situation in Cabo Delgado, **Mozambique**, where over 300,000 people have fled their homes. With the Cabo Delgado recording the second-highest number of COVID-19 cases in Mozambique, population displacements have the potential to accelerate the spread of the virus.

West and Central Africa: The region has reported over 190,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases; security constraints, ongoing political developments and environmental shocks continue to trigger widespread population displacement and are affecting the delivery of WFP assistance and the safety of humanitarian staff. The Central Sahel (**Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger**) is facing an alarming food and nutrition crisis with an additional 7.4 million people estimated to be food insecure by the end of 2020.

Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

Since the June Global Response to COVID-19 plan, **US\$ 2.1 billion has been received from more than 80 donors and funding sources**. The generous support of donors has been critical in enabling WFP to step up to respond to the immense challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding received to date has been uneven across WFP operations and several country offices continue to face significant shortfalls. Insufficient funding has forced some country offices to prioritise limited resources by deferring plans to scale-up and reducing rations and coverage. For example, WFP has been forced to reduce food or cash transfers by up to 30 percent for over 2.7 million refugees in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda due to funding shortages, and will need to cut deeper in the coming months unless urgent additional funding is received.

As described in the September update to the Global Response to COVID-19 plan, with the onset of the pandemic, WFP's needs have grown considerably and are outpacing available funding. **To meet needs over the next six months until March 2021, US\$ 5.1 billion is required.**



Food cuts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo severely impact refugees

UNHCR and WFP have sounded the alarm on the impact of food shortages on refugees in the DRC, after food cuts of up to 25 per cent.

WFP Operations

The [September update to WFP's Global Response to COVID-19 plan](#) details how **needs have grown considerably since the onset of the pandemic, outpacing funding**. Needs will be 16 percent (USD 1 billion) higher for the next six months (October 2020–March 2021), with Regional Bureau Panama reporting the highest needs. A total of 89 **budget revisions** have been submitted in 2020, of which 52 are fully or partially related to COVID-19. An additional 21 budget revisions are in the pipeline.

In response to the increased needs, WFP is scaling up **cash-based transfer** operations to safely provide assistance to beneficiaries while continuing to boost local markets. Since March, 44 WFP country offices have scaled up existing cash-based transfer operations or switched from in-kind to cash assistance. Since January, **WFP has distributed USD 1.3 billion across 64 countries**.

WFP is supporting governments in developing their own responses to COVID-19; an increasing number of governments have called upon WFP's expertise to expand their cash transfer programmes, particularly in urban areas, where the impact of COVID-19 on jobs and daily wages are particularly harsh on daily-wage labourers. Out of the 50 governments WFP has supported with social protection interventions, **WFP is currently engaged with 36 governments on cash-based transfer programming**.

WFP has also provided support to 7 million schoolchildren during school closures with take-home rations or cash-based transfers. As of now, schools reopened in 16 countries where WFP implements school feeding. National protocols have been developed to ensure all precautions are in place to ensure a safe return to schools and canteens. To date, on-site feeding resumed in 11 countries, in consultation with the governments and local authorities.

Globally, 90 countries have now reopened their schools, however 50 percent of the total enrolled learners remain affected by school closures. WFP is working with partners to make sure vulnerable students get back to learning in a safe and healthy way.

The **Needs-Based Plan for school feeding activities until the end of the year is 14 percent higher than the initial plan before the pandemic hit**. This increase reflects the higher numbers of children that need support due to the economic shock, increased vulnerability and specific groups of children at risk of not returning to schools once they reopen.



WFP leaves no one behind in Lebanon

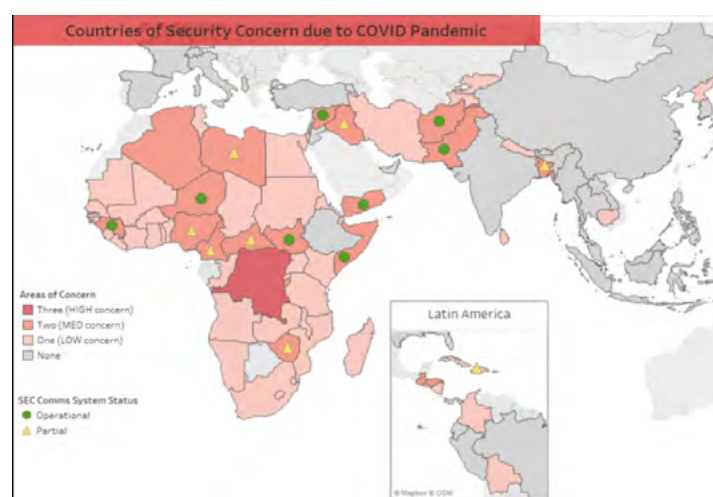
When schools were closed in Lebanon to curb COVID-19, WFP distributed two-month food boxes to 13,000 families whose children attended public schools across the country.

WFP staff around the world are using creative solutions to keep delivering timely and vital assistance despite the pandemic. Updated for the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, [WFP's COVID-19 Innovation and Technology website](#) is a living platform showcasing field examples of WFP's rapid response to COVID-19 through innovative approaches, technologies and digital transformation. Check out the video on **Nutrition in Algeria – Refugee Chef's TV Show** to hear how, with the threat of COVID-19, the show has played an important role in educating people about hygiene and how healthy eating helps boost immune systems.

Organisations around the world are coming together to systematically document, analyse and synthesise information related to program innovations and adaptations in the management of child wasting during COVID-19. Supported by WFP, the State of Acute Malnutrition's [Innovations and COVID-19 Adaptations in the Management of Child Wasting website](#) tracks protocol adaptations in the management of child wasting during COVID-19 across contexts, highlights innovative case studies, and aggregates available resources.

SECURITY

The level of security concern for the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** has been elevated to **High** in the COVID-19 context whereas **20 countries** remain of **medium concern for security**, spread across all WFP regions, with no change since the previous reporting period. Several additional countries remain On Watch due to instability which may be exacerbated by COVID-19; **Mali** has been added to this list due to the political uncertainty caused by a military coup.



Latest WFP data indicates that there are three countries of medium security concern in the COVID-19 context that are scaling up despite their limited funding and buffer stocks: **Haiti, Nigeria and Zimbabwe**. Meanwhile, there are another seven countries of medium security concern in the COVID-19 context and challenges in two of the other operational dimensions (funding, scale-up and buffer stocks): **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Guinea, DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen**.

All these countries will require further attention from a security perspective to ensure that the WFP operational objectives are met in a general security environment that is deteriorating aside from COVID-19.

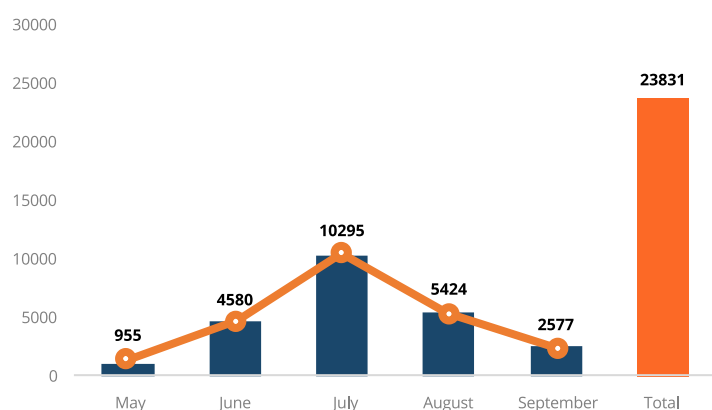
As previously assessed, COVID-19 remains only one of multiple factors influencing the security threat environment in most WFP operating contexts. Signs of mounting civil unrest are visible and armed conflict continues unabated (sometimes exacerbated by COVID-19 factors) while growing risks of political instability adversely affect the WFP operating environment in several countries. The extended strain on host government and security force resources is leading to wider gaps in security and increasing risks to WFP personnel, partners/contractors or programmes.

Common Services

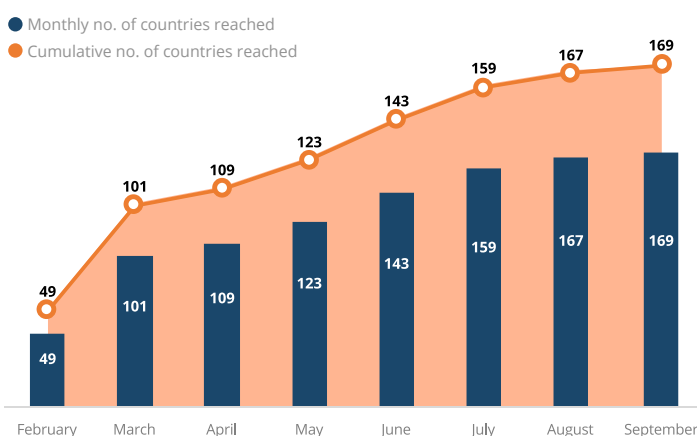
COVID-19 had an unprecedented impact on global supply chains, leading to a global slowdown, and in some cases shutdown which has impacted the ability of the health and humanitarian community to mount a global response to the pandemic. As organizations faced challenges in their attempts to transport cargo and personnel to where they were most needed, WFP stepped up to support the global COVID-19 response. Where commercial options were not available, WFP leveraged its supply chain capacity and expertise to provide cargo and passenger transport on behalf of the humanitarian community.

WFP commenced its global air passenger service on 1 May, and since then has conducted over **1,300 flights to 67 destinations** around the world, providing a lifeline for the **24,138 passengers from 384 organizations** who have used the service to get to and from destinations that would not otherwise be reachable. As airspace reopens and more commercial airlines resume operations, WFP is standing down services to destinations where safe and reliable commercial options exist, but is continuing to open up flights to new destinations as required by the health and humanitarian community. While services have now been discontinued to **49 destinations**, flights have now been added to San Salvador and Tegucigalpa - and authorization has been received for Nadi, Fiji, with the first flight scheduled to take place to Nadi from Kuala Lumpur on 13 October.

Monthly Passenger Trend, 1 May - 30 September 2020



Countries reached through WFP dispatches 1 February - 30 September 2020 (BSP, UNHRD, Free-to-User)



In addition to passengers, WFP also continues to move cargo on behalf of the health and humanitarian community to support their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other ongoing humanitarian emergencies. To-date, a total of **77,029 m³** of cargo has been dispatched on behalf of **62 organizations** to **169 countries** – enough cargo to fill over 30 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Of this, **62,247 m³** has been transported via WFP's free-to-user cargo services under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP), with the remainder transported through the WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Response Depots or Bilateral Service Provision. As such, WFP has now moved roughly **65 percent** of the expected total cargo requirements for the global COVID-19 response under the GHRP.

A growing improvement of the commercial airfreight market as well as more available supply of health items and a clearer idea of remaining cargo requirements has led WFP to begin discussions with partners on a gradual phase-out of free-to-user cargo services over the next two months. WFP remains committed to supporting the humanitarian community and ensuring that all outstanding cargo movement requests are fulfilled as part of any phase-out. While international air cargo services across the hub network will be discontinued, existing mandated services will continue as will cost-recovery services provided through WFP Bilateral Service Provision. More information can be found [here](#).

WFP is continuing to support the humanitarian community as co-lead the aviation arm of the UN Medevac Cell together with UN Department of Operational Support, based out of the Strategic Air Operations Centre in Brindisi, **Italy**. To-date, the cell has completed a total of **70 medevacs** - 45 carried out by WFP and 25 by UNDOCS - since its roll out on 22 May when the unified system was first activated by the Secretary General.

To learn more about WFP's common services in support of the health and humanitarian response to COVID-19, read the latest publications [here](#).

WFP-led and co-led Clusters

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)

To support the COVID-19 response in **Bangladesh**, the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) is coordinating the provision of critical data connectivity in 22 treatment and isolation centres. Despite movement restrictions, the ETS team is providing regular maintenance, assessments and installations to ensure reliable Internet connectivity for the humanitarian community in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

Operators at a dedicated COVID-19 call centre established by the ETC in Bangui, **Central African Republic**, continue to answer calls from the general public to assist the government's response to the virus. Operators provide support and advice, while referring cases with COVID-19 symptoms to the Ministry of Health.

In Tripoli, **Libya**, the ETS-managed call centre continues to serve as a humanitarian hotline and the dedicated national COVID-19 hotline to support the government's response to the pandemic. To date, the call centre has received more than 12,030 calls. Most COVID-19-related calls were from people asking for information, such as contact numbers or locations of emergency centres. Operators provided official guidelines and referred those with potential COVID-19 symptoms to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

As part of the COVID-19 response in **Yemen**, ETC Internet connectivity services are now available in quarantine centres in Aden and Al Hudaydah. The ETC has received the necessary funding to upgrade a COVID-19 hotline in Sana'a and to establish a new hotline in Aden to support the country's response to the pandemic.

Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC)

In **Zimbabwe**, during August, FSL Cluster partners provided in-kind food assistance, vouchers or cash to 745,000 people in rural and urban areas. To adapt their activities to COVID 19, 11 FSL Cluster partners added soap to their distributions, reaching 300,000 people. Seventeen partners now display COVID-19 information, education and communication materials during their interventions, reaching 869,000 people, and eight partners have also included health and referral services for 679,000 people at intervention sites.

In Cox's Bazar, **Bangladesh**, scaled-up food and e-voucher assistance for Rohingya refugees is almost complete: 94 percent of households will receive 14 nutritionally complete food items and all households will receive high-energy biscuits and Super Cereal for extra nutrition. Self-reliance activities for refugees in the camps have resumed, with a limited number of staff and COVID-19 prevention measures in place.

In **Afghanistan**, lower disease infection rates among staff have allowed FSC group activities to restart, such as communal asset creation and technical agricultural and vocational trainings. The relaxing of COVID-19 movement restrictions is having a positive impact on the seasonal agricultural workforce and leading to minor improvements in the purchasing power of smallholders and landless labourers. Nonetheless, increased prices of staple goods and logistical bottlenecks continue to affect food availability and access.

More information can be found in the [FSC August-September COVID-19 Situation Report](#).

Global Logistics Cluster

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the Logistics Cluster is facilitating the storage of 260 m3 of COVID-19 related items in Kinshasa on behalf of WHO and the Ministry of Health, as well as facilitating the sharing of information related to the dedicated COVID-19 procurement portal.

In **South Sudan**, the Logistics Cluster, on behalf of WHO, is currently facilitating the transport of oxygen concentrators and case management-related commodities. Deliveries have been so far been completed to Bentiu, Rumbek, Malakal, Wau, Kuajok and Aweil.

In the **Pacific Region**, the Pacific Logistics Cluster is supporting partners with access to the Pacific Humanitarian Air Service and has facilitated the transport of COVID-19 related cargo to Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Kiribati and Nauru. Additionally, The Pacific Logistics Cluster transit warehouse located in Fiji is fully operational and currently storing COVID-19 related cargo for several partners

More information can be found in the [Logistics Cluster October COVID-19 Situation Report](#).

Regional Updates

Regional Bureau Bangkok

The number of COVID-19 cases in Asia-Pacific countries of WFP operations (including oversight countries) now exceeds 8.6 million, up from 4.1 million in August. WFP is supporting governments to address the impact of COVID-19 through national social protection systems; basic service delivery; analysis of food systems, food security and nutrition; emergency relief; and humanitarian common services. COVID-19 is compounding the risks already faced in many parts of the region due to escalating conflict and climate change. In the current monsoon season, several countries have already been hit with floods and landslides. Preparations for heavy rain and the upcoming winter are even more difficult than usual and funding is stretched for critical operations such as **Myanmar** and **Afghanistan**.

WFP activities in Asia-Pacific have been modified to continue lifesaving relief assistance while avoiding unnecessary exposure to risks of infection. This includes serving over 100,000 people with general food assistance to support government quarantine measures in **Myanmar, Laos** and **Nepal**. Considering the recent spike of COVID-19 cases in central Rakhine in **Myanmar**, WFP extended this assistance to additional quarantine sites in the country in September. WFP has adjusted nutrition-specific and -sensitive interventions across the region to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. In **Bangladesh**, WFP and several other agencies are continuing to engage refugees in Cox's Bazar in mask production, with 250,000 masks produced for the refugee population. While thousands of schools across the region are closed, WFP has adjusted its programmes to reach over 900,000 children with take-home rations or cash-based transfers in **Cambodia, Laos, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, Myanmar** and **Sri Lanka**.

WFP is also supporting supply chain services in the region, facilitating the movement of COVID-19 essential items and offering common storage space to humanitarian partners. A number of regular air routes are operational in the region (serving **Myanmar, Laos, Nepal** and **Timor-Leste**) and have so far transported more than 2,000 humanitarian personnel and 27 mt of essential humanitarian cargo. WFP also operated two flights connecting countries and territories of the Pacific Islands.



Don't be afraid. Be prepared

WFP Bangladesh staff member Kakoli Chakravarty recounts her experience with COVID-19 and what it took for her to recover.

In the Pacific, WFP is assisting governments and national stakeholders to capture trends and data to improve monitoring and coordination through mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM). Data collection is ongoing in **Fiji, Samoa** and **Tonga** and will begin in Kiribati this month.

Significant scale-up is under way for **Afghanistan** and **Bangladesh**. In **Bangladesh**, WFP is increasing its operation to support 1.1 million more people through the development of urban safety nets in at-risk, low-income urban slums in Dhaka and Chittagong Hill Tracts, and through expansion of in-kind food and cash transfers to vulnerable host communities in Cox's Bazar. Out of these, WFP has so far reached approximately 500,000 people affected by COVID-19 in the host community in Cox's Bazar. In **Afghanistan**, WFP has begun its scale-up to an additional 3 million people impacted by COVID-19 with food and cash transfers during the second half of 2020, having reached now up to 125,000 people in urban areas. The COVID-response focuses on urban poor households to complement WFP's regular programming which primarily targets households in rural areas.

Regional Bureau Cairo

Across the region, WFP country offices continue to sustain ongoing livelihood operations, where possible, by resuming activities or alternative training delivery mechanisms. In **Iraq**, food assistance for assets activities have gradually resumed and are moving forward in line with necessary government guidelines and WFP standard operating procedures regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, four emergency cash-for-work (CFW) projects have started in four locations to support the livelihoods of vulnerable urban communities affected by the pandemic. Similarly, in **Tajikistan**, WFP is implementing a CFW programme to support vulnerable households in four districts of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) to cope with the socio-economic shocks caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. WFP and its cooperating partners are involving target households in public work, making sure that COVID-19 preventive measures are applied. The initiative is expected to assist 15,000 people.

WFP continues to raise public awareness using key messages to promote ways to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on nutrition. In the **State of Palestine**, the “Nutrition Awareness and Cash Based Transfer” project is ongoing in the southern West Bank. Since the beginning of the project in July, WFP has delivered five WhatsApp sessions under Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) activities aiming to positively influence behaviours and improve the health and nutrition of vulnerable Palestinians. Among the five sessions, there was a focus on precautionary measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as social distancing and cleaning as key preventative measures to avoid infection during pregnancy.

In **Egypt**, WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS), concluded its first monthly cycle of support for 40,000 children under two years of age with an unconditional monthly cash top-up of EGP 200 (US\$ 13) to the ‘Takaful & Karama’ national social protection programme. This support aims to minimize the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on poor families with young children.



Conflict, economic collapse and coronavirus are pushing Yemen to the edge of famine

Needs are spiralling upwards in Yemen, where the price of food has skyrocketed to 140 percent higher compared to pre-war levels. WFP is calling for urgent financial support and unhindered humanitarian access.

Cash-based transfers remain a key assistance mechanism in adjusting or expanding WFP's activities in response to COVID-19. WFP **Egypt's** third, and last, cycle of its emergency support to the Ministry of Manpower for an EGP 500 (US\$32) monthly cash assistance targeting 50,000 casual workers was completed. In **Iran**, WFP authorized an ad-hoc 1 million Rial per person (US\$ 5) cash top-up for all inhabitants in Saveh settlement upon the request of the government and UNHCR. Since the beginning of the pandemic, inhabitants of seven settlements that have been placed under quarantine have received cash top-ups during lockdown to maintain adequate levels of food consumption.

WFP is closely monitoring the reopening of schools in the region in order to safely re-commence its school meal activities. In **Armenia**, the government announced that schools will be opened six days per week, instead of five. WFP is collaborating with the government to develop the best strategy for organizing the school meal programme upon school opening. In **Kyrgyzstan**, schools will open in the first quarter of the new school year only for first grade schoolchildren, with other grades studying remotely. WFP's school meals programme in Kyrgyzstan has developed a contingency plan to ensure that the programme will be flexible to respond to the several scenarios of how schools will function in the first half-year of the academic year 2020-2021. This plan includes a school meals at home campaign with the government and the Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute in which schoolchildren and their parents will receive awareness raising and social behaviour change materials related to child health and nutrition.

The West and Central African region has reported over 190,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases. Of the 19 countries in the region, 14 have recorded a decrease in the number of active COVID-19 cases, with most pronounced decreases in **Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia** and **Sao Tome and Principe**. Similarly, the number of active cases in The Gambia diminished, after a spike in new cases in August.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, security constraints, ongoing political developments and environmental shocks continue to trigger widespread population displacement and to impact the delivery of WFP assistance and the safety of humanitarian staff. Attacks targeting civilians and aid workers by non-state armed groups were reported in the **Central Sahel, Cameroon, Central African Republic** and **Nigeria**. The recent **floods** in several countries of the region, including **Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger**, and **Nigeria** have caused fatalities, damage to property, loss of livelihoods, population displacement and limited access to some areas. In **Chad** alone, some 11,800 people were displaced in the Lake Region, one of the highest numbers ever recorded by IOM in such a short timeframe. Among them, 36 percent were displaced as a result of floods and 64 percent due to the worsening security situation.



WFP staff prepare for a distribution in Kai Kai, northern Cameroon. Photo: Sara Moussavi/WFP

The **Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger)** is facing an alarming food and nutrition crisis with an additional 7.4 million people estimated to be food insecure by the end of 2020. A high-level humanitarian event on Central Sahel took place on 8 September. The focus was on operational lessons learned and forward-looking plans relating to humanitarian action, development and peace efforts, including special attention to the impact and consequences of COVID-19. The EU, OCHA and Germany, the convening parties, urged other governments to step up their support to the Sahel countries with a priority on **Niger** and **Burkina Faso**. The second part of the event will include a ministerial round table scheduled for 20 October. Despite financial sanctions imposed by ECOWAS following Mali's military coup in August, WFP's operations in the country are ongoing. The impact of potential cash shortages is expected to be minimal.

WFP continues to implement cash distributions in **Côte d'Ivoire**, reaching some 1,300 households in the capital Abidjan affected by the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, including people living with HIV. In **Niger**, the first COVID-19 related urban cash distributions started as part of the Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) programme in the city of Tahoua early September. These are the first distributions carried out at national level by a UN agency. Other countries in the region are also preparing to roll out or scale up cash transfers as part of the COVID-19 response, including **Cameroon, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania** and **Nigeria**.



Families face triple threat of climate, conflict and coronavirus in Mali

In response to increasing needs, WFP is providing food and nutrition assistance to 1 million food-insecure families in Mali.

In **Chad**, the second and last food distribution as part of the national response plan targeting 433,000 people in both rural and urban areas is ongoing, while in **Guinea**, following the recent completion of food distributions in line with the national strategy "STOP COVID-19 in 60 days", discussions are underway with the Government for the continuity of this assistance under a new strategy. Food assistance to COVID-19 patients, people under quarantine and/or people receiving treatment is also ongoing in the **Central African Republic** and **Sierra Leone**.

Lean season, nutrition and resilience-strengthening assistance continue as schools progressively reopen in the region, in line with safe school reopening strategies developed by host governments and education partners. While on-site school meals resume, WFP continues to distribute take-home rations in some countries (e.g. **The Gambia**), while also preparing to expand take-home ration distributions in other countries (e.g. the **Central African Republic** and **Mali**).

In Southern Africa the pandemic is exacerbating food insecurity outcomes which are set to further deteriorate. WFP projects that some 42 million people will need food assistance in the next 12 months in the 12 countries where WFP operates in the region. Malnutrition in the region is of great concern; according to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the COVID-19 outbreak is likely to have devastating effects on malnutrition rates with acute malnutrition across the region surging by 25 percent or more in 2020/21. The SADC projects more than eight million children facing acute malnutrition, of which 2.3 million of them expected to require life-saving treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

Further, the intensification of conflict in the eastern **Democratic Republic of the Congo** and, increased presence of insurgents in Cabo Delgado province in northern **Mozambique** continues to compound the food insecurity of vulnerable communities. Relatedly, the impact of the pandemic has significantly affected refugees and internally displaced people by hampering limited livelihood opportunities as access to the informal economy has weakened and movement has become more difficult. Funding for humanitarian assistance for these vulnerable groups has come under pressure, which has necessitated reduced food rations for thousands of refugees.

Meanwhile, regional markets are under pressure and prices are higher than the five-year average. Key sources of income for families, communities and governments have disappeared or substantially diminished. As joblessness has increased rapidly, remittances from breadwinners in South Africa and in the region, vital for millions in **Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique** and **Lesotho**, have drastically fallen. The depreciation of local currencies against the US Dollar has further eroded purchasing power.

In response, WFP has initiated or plans sizeable cash-based transfer programmes for poor people in urban areas in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, the Republic of Congo, Zambia** and **Zimbabwe**. In **Madagascar**, in support of the Government's social protection programme, WFP has provided cash transfers to 113,000 households (i.e. 565,000 people) in Antananarivo since April. Under a second round starting in September, WFP is planning to expand to other urban areas to assist 84,000 additional vulnerable households (i.e. 420,000 people).



[Dispatch from Brazzaville during coronavirus](#)

Cash transfers from WFP are providing a safety net for families in Brazzaville coping with COVID-19, giving them more purchasing power and providing support to retailers as well as the local economy.

In **Zimbabwe** WFP has adopted a new e-voucher mechanism allowing recipients to redeem points for commodities together with the services of Western Union where recipients use codes sent via SMS to be exchanged for cash. Given the volatile financial situation in Zimbabwe, having several cash delivery options at hand allows WFP to quickly switch between them in response to future shocks or changes in the operating environment; some 100,000 people in urban areas were assisted with cash-based transfers in July in-country, and 68,000 under the August cycle.

In the **Republic of Congo** WFP has started the second phase of its COVID-19 response, aimed at assisting 35,000 severely food insecure people in three arrondissements of Brazzaville via mobile money transfers. The plan also envisages assisting 75,000 children and pregnant and breastfeeding women in health centres in Brazzaville and PointeNoire to prevent and treat moderate acute malnutrition following increasing levels of malnutrition. Meanwhile, in **Mozambique**, WFP and UNICEF are supporting the Government in the expansion of its social protection programme to reach 100,000 households in urban and peri urban areas for three months.

WFP urgently requires USD 662 million to sustain its response in the region through January 2021. Three-quarters is accounted for by the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe** and **Mozambique**.

Regional Bureau Nairobi

The East African region has confirmed over 153,000 cases with Kenya and Ethiopia accounting for 80 percent of the caseload. The food security situation in the region remains alarming with the compounding impact of floods, locust outbreak and socio-economic impact of the pandemic. The seasonal forecast of a 60 percent likelihood of below-average rainfall for the upcoming lean season (September 2020 - November 2020) in **Ethiopia, Somalia** and **Kenya** may also exacerbate food insecurity outcomes.

In the region, WFP continues to support social protection programmes and urban safety nets to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable communities in the region. In **Kenya**, WFP is implementing a three-month cash assistance response to 282,000 people living in informal settlements within Nairobi. This response will complement ongoing Government assistance to urban families. In addition, WFP plans to expand its cash assistance response for an additional month in Nairobi. WFP is planning an expansion of the COVID-19 urban response in Mombasa county – the second most affected county after Nairobi. In Wau, South Sudan, cash distribution started last month with a new financial service provider targeting 27,500 people. Meanwhile, WFP is working closely with the local administration in **Burundi** for the preparation of the provision of food assistance to food-insecure populations in Ngozi, Ruyigi, Bubanza, Cibitoke, and Rumonge provinces for the upcoming lean season (October – December) to reach 154,000 people.

WFP continues to sustain assistance to refugees and internally displaced people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. In **Rwanda**, WFP provided hot meals to over 350 refugees in designated refugee quarantine centers. Relatedly, WFP and partners supported 507 Burundian refugees voluntarily returning to their home country with cooked rations. According to UNHCR's estimates, 8,000 refugees are expected to be repatriated by the end of 2020. In **Somalia**, a UNHCR review highlighted that most refugees and asylum seekers that have called the agency's hotline have lost their only source of livelihood and are unable to meet their basic needs since March. In response, UNHCR and WFP **Somalia** signed a three-month agreement (July to September) to provide a one off 1,536 mt of emergency life-saving food assistance to some 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly women and children. Distributions began in August, with WFP providing the food and UNHCR conducting the distributions.

Regional Bureau Panama

The region continues to contend with the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, tropical storms and deteriorating political developments. **Haiti's** security situation is expected to further deteriorate due to currency devaluation, violence and protests, putting further strain on the country's food insecurity. In **Colombia**, internal conflict has increased significantly with over 40 massacres reported, leading to internal displacement. **Bolivia** is also facing instability as presidential elections are scheduled in October.

WFP operations are ongoing across the region. Cash based transfers, school meals, and resilience activities are resuming gradually. WFP continues to expand vital assistance through cash-based transfers in **El Salvador** and **Guatemala**. In **El Salvador**, food rations were delivered to hospitals for patients and health workers. On the other hand, **Peru** registered a rise in new cases of COVID-19 with the state of emergency extended until December. Similarly, COVID-19 cases in **Guatemala** continue to rise, and WFP is enhancing resilience activities. The government requested WFP's technical assistance on programme design for a national crusade against malnutrition. Partnership initiatives with the government on linking farmers to markets and micro-insurance are moving forward.

The school meals programme in **Colombia** assists 450,000 children per month, including 42,000 migrant children in border areas. WFP is supporting the COVID-19 response project led by the government, reaching 4,000 people, expanding interventions to the Amazon region and aiming to reach up to 110,000 people in eight cities, during self-isolation phases. In addition, the micronutrient programme is being amplified to reach 140,000 children. WFP is also assisting in strengthening the data management systems for people under national programmes. Following the start of the school year in September in La Sierra, **Ecuador**, WFP is supporting some 7,800 families through the government.

Poor economic and security conditions and climate shocks compounded by COVID-19 have worsened acute food insecurity in **Haiti** with at least 4 million Haitians in need of urgent food assistance. This is 42% of the population, of which 900,000 suffer from severe hunger.

**Regional Bureau
Panama**

Vulnerable households in rural areas lack work opportunities due to high labor costs and limited resources for farmers. This, combined with high food prices, has forced communities to resort to negative coping strategies including migration. WFP is scaling up its emergency programmes to reach up to 1.3 million vulnerable Haitians with food and cash and has restarted its school meals activities as the COVID-19 lockdown lifted. WFP's role in Haiti goes beyond food assistance: WFP is providing logistics services to the entire humanitarian community and supports the national response to COVID-19 with its supply chain expertise. In parallel, WFP is continuing to work towards sustainable systems to address the root causes of food insecurity. WFP also supporting the government in developing a national, shock-responsive social protection policy, which was officially adopted in June.