



# WFP Mauritania Country Brief

April 2018

## Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel, with a population of 4.4 million (UNFPA, 2017) living over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km<sup>2</sup> territory.

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity and resilience of populations. Over the past five years, food insecurity rates ranged from 25 to 30 percent during the lean season. Global acute malnutrition rates are also high in children aged 6-59 months and above the WHO emergency threshold of 15 percent (SMART) in 21 departments, especially during the lean season.

Mauritania continues to host the second-to largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with more than 53,600 refugees registered in Mbera camp as of April 2018. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Gender Inequality Index: **147**

2015 Human Development Index: **156 out of 188**

Food insecurity: **26%** (FSMS 2018) post-harvest

Chronic malnutrition: **31%** of children between 6-59 months

Main Photo

Credit: WFP/Adrien Rebours  
Caption: a countryside path near Kiffa (central Assaba region)

## In Numbers

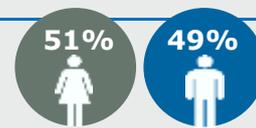
**538,400 projected** persons in food crisis (source: *Cadre Harmonisé* projections IPC Phase 3 & 4 for 2018 lean season)

**2.3 percent** severe acute malnutrition in children under 5 (above WHO emergency level. Source: SMART 2017)

**US\$ 20.4\*** six months (May-Oct 2018) net funding requirements, representing 70,6% of total needs

\*Including emergency funding needs

**89,419 people assisted** in April 2018



## Strategic Planning

- The first draft of the integrated livelihood strategy for refugees and host communities (developed under WFP-UNHCR co-lead) was shared and discussed with government authorities at capital, and at regional level in April. The focus on improving livelihood opportunities in the region of Hodh Ech-Charghi is key to enable the improvement of self-reliance and resilience of the two communities. The whole-of-UN approach was welcomed by the regional government authorities as an example of bridging the humanitarian-development nexus in Mauritania.
- WFP Mauritania's Country Strategic Plan (CSP 2019–2022) Concept Note was presented to WFP Executive Board and was well received by Board members.

## 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan

- In April, WFP was among the first responders to launch the first early lean season distributions in the priority departments in Guidimakha, Gorgol and Hodh Ech-Charghi. WFP pursues its work with partners and CSA to ensure all targeting is completed ahead of the start of the peak of the lean season interventions, and stands ready to position itself in geographical areas where other partners cannot. Among the 538,400 people projected to be in food crisis by the CH, the integrated food/nutrition response plan targets 470,000 people. Of these, WFP foresees to assist 385,000 people (depending on availability of funding).
- Between June and September (Phase II of Integrated Response Plan), WFP is scaling up the geographical and household targeting to some 221,000 drought-affected people based on advances, funding received and expected with high probabilities.

## Operational Updates

### SO 2 – Support to drought affected people

- The first early-lean season distributions reached 34,500 beneficiaries. Despite some delays due to the overseas transport, the distributions to targeted locations were made possible thanks to good coordination on the field between WFP, Government and financial and cooperating partners.

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WFP Country Strategy		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Confirmed Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018)</b>		
<b>61.6 m</b>	<b>21.5 m</b>	<b>29.1 m</b>
<b>Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food</b>		
<b>Strategic Outcome 1: Food insecure (and vulnerable) Mauritanian populations in the six targeted regions, including school-age children have stable access to adequate food all year-round</b>		
<b>4.4 m</b>	<b>0.3 m</b>	<b>1.2 m</b>
<b>Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food</b>		
<b>Strategic Outcome 2: Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises</b>		
<b>49.8 m</b>	<b>16.9 m</b>	<b>27.4 m</b>
<b>Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition</b>		
<b>Strategic Outcome 3: Children and pregnant and lactating women and girls in the six targeted regions have improved nutritional status all year-round</b> <i>NB: this includes only capacity-development augmentation</i>		
<b>0.170 m</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.075 m</b>
<b>Strategic Result 3: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders</b>		
<b>Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure smallholders and communities in the six targeted regions have enhanced livelihoods and resilience to better support food security and nutrition needs all year-round</b>		
<b>2.9 m</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.3 m</b>
<b>Strategic Result 8: Global partnership support</b>		
<b>Strategic Outcome 5: The humanitarian community in Mauritania has access to UNHAS services all year-round</b>		
<b>3.3 m</b>	<b>2.3 m</b>	<b>0.25m</b>
<b>Strategic Result 5: Countries strengthened capacities</b>		
<b>Strategic Outcome 6: Government has enhanced capacities to manage food security and nutrition policies and programmes and identify, target and assist food-insecure and nutritionally-vulnerable populations all year-round</b>		
<b>0.9 m</b>	<b>0m</b>	<b>0.5 m</b>

## WFP Country Activities

<b>SO 1</b>	Food-insecure (and vulnerable) Mauritanian populations in the six targeted regions, including school-age children have stable access to adequate food all year-round
<b>SO 2</b>	Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises
<b>SO 3</b>	Children and pregnant and lactating women and girls in the six targeted regions have improved nutritional status all year-round <i>NB: this includes only capacity development and augmentation</i>
<b>SO 4</b>	Food-insecure smallholders and communities in the six targeted regions have enhanced livelihoods and resilience to better support food security and nutrition needs all year-round
<b>SO 5</b>	The humanitarian community in Mauritania has access to UNHAS services all year-round
<b>SO6</b>	Government has enhanced capacities to manage food security and nutrition policies and programmes, and identify, target and assist food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations all year-round

Households either received (depending on livelihood zones) monthly food rations of cereals and vegetable oil, or monthly cash entitlements of MRU 2,400 (USD 68). While WFP is responding to an emergency, it continues to invest in interventions addressing root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. Nutritious food was also provided to children aged 6-59 month, pregnant and lactating women for prevention and treatment of malnutrition.

### SO 2 – Support to Malian refugees

WFP assisted 54,907 refugees in April with monthly cash entitlements (USD 12.75). No in-kind distributions were provided as part of the mixed cash/in-kind. WFP also provided preventive and curative nutrition support to 524 children aged 6-59 months. The increase in beneficiaries assisted follows the new arrivals, registrations of previously de-activated people, and births (1,844 observed during the month of April) in Mbera camp.

### SO 5 - UNHAS

- In April, UNHAS transported 166 passengers and 0.922 mt of light cargo through 29 in-country rotations. UNHAS flights are still only authorized for the locations of Nema and Bassikounou.

## Monitoring

- Targeting of beneficiaries continued in April at department and commune level, in preparation of the peak of the lean season scale-up for unconditional food and cash distribution, and nutrition support. WFP technicians further prepared to roll out a series of monitoring surveys in May (post-distributions monitoring survey and market assessment), with the purpose of monitoring the impact of WFP activities.

## Challenges

- WFP and the UN are furthering efforts to ensure annual authorization for all locations. The government restriction of UNHAS authorization is significantly affecting humanitarian and development organizations' activities in otherwise hard-to-reach areas.
- Limited resources continue to affect WFP's readiness capacity in terms of adequate targeting and pipeline to intervene with food/cash and nutrition assistance in support of drought-affected people. **As of April, WFP has received only 15 percent of its total requirements needed for the food/nutrition emergency response.** In agreement with other partners and based on funding received, WFP will be prioritizing assistance to households in food crisis and with members at risk high of malnutrition (pregnant and lactating women and children under 5).
- Since January, assistance to refugees covered only 65 percent of their needs, due to late funding and in-kind pipeline breaks. The first in-kind cargo arrived late April, meaning the first food distributions of the year will start in May on a reduced ration. Urgent funding of USD 2.3 million is needed to ensure cash entitlements to refugees between May-July, and USD 5.2 million is needed to cover the next six months.

## Donors

USA (FFP and BPRM), UK (DFID), Japan, European Union (ECHO), Australia, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, Spain, France, Monaco