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# WFP Global Operational Response Plan 2021

Update #1

February 2021



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# Introduction

**In 2020, the triple threat of conflict, climate change and the socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 drove human suffering to a staggering scale. Today, the outlook is even more concerning.** More than 30 million people face emergency levels of food insecurity in 41 countries, dependant on assistance to meet their most basic food needs. Any shock or reduction in humanitarian assistance could push them further into catastrophic hunger. In 2020, famine and famine-like conditions were observed in areas of Burkina Faso, South Sudan, and Yemen, and today an estimated 155,000 people are in situations of famine, suffering extreme deprivation in access to food and critical rates of acute malnutrition and mortality.

**The situation is expected to worsen by the end of the year as the capacities of households, communities and governments are already exhausted, unable to cope with further shocks.**

As we enter 2021, an estimated 270 million people are in acute food insecurity, or at risk, across 79 countries where WFP operates. In nearly all countries where WFP has real-time monitoring, reliance on negative livelihoods-based coping has increased through 2020. The social and economic fallout of the pandemic is expected to drive an additional 6.7 million children to suffer acute malnutrition, increasing the risk of child mortality by an expected 10,000 deaths per month. And more than 220 million children continue to be affected by school closures; 24 million schoolchildren are at risk of dropping out of school entirely, including up to 20 million girls.

Not only are the needs enormous, but the operating environment is also complex. In addition to the arrival of new COVID-19 variants, in 2021, cases of Ebola Virus Disease are now confirmed in two countries. Meanwhile, deteriorating conflict and security situations are observed in every region where WFP operates. In 8 out of 10 of the world's largest food crises, conflict and insecurity are among the key drivers of acute hunger, challenging humanitarian access. Conflict analysis is key to informing innovative strategies to reach communities trapped by insecurity. As is humanitarian diplomacy to overcome access constraints and enhance accountability, including through the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2417 when necessary.

**The situation requires urgent action to avert catastrophe and protect past gains in strengthening community resilience.** This means:

- 1. Scaling up life-saving food and nutrition assistance** to prevent and mitigate famine and ensure that those further behind are able to meet their essential needs in periods of crisis;
- 2. Reinforcing integrated community-based resilience** to promote recovery including through climate-smart asset development, sustainable livelihood opportunities, smallholder farmer value chains, and the safe return of children to school; and

- 3. Investing in long-term systems recovery and strengthening,** leveraging successful initiatives from 2020 to build back better from the pandemic by supporting stronger national social protection systems, food systems, and supply chains.

**Last year demonstrated WFP's readiness to take on new, unprecedented challenges. In 2020, WFP scaled-up to reach more than 100 million people, a record high.** Amidst widespread lockdowns, movement restrictions, and bans on group activities, WFP rapidly put in place innovative and flexible delivery mechanisms to ensure assistance reached those in need. Cash-based transfer capacities were reinforced, enabling WFP operations as well as national social protection systems. Real-time food security monitoring was scaled up to track evolving hunger situations and ensure that WFP, partners and governments were alerted to take pre-emptive action to address emerging needs. When the global transport market came to a standstill, WFP provided vital supply chain and logistics services to ensure the continued movement of essential staff and cargo. And when economic downturn risked WFP's resource availability, the organization reinforced new strategic partnerships including with international financial institutes and the private sector.

**Today WFP is ready. But the unprecedented response will require unprecedented support.** As of January, WFP's 2021 approved Programme of Work stands at US\$ 13.5 billion for more than 109 million beneficiaries. However, these requirements are expected to significantly increase during the year as new assessments come out and new crises drive additional needs.

**One month into the year, updated WFP operational planning suggests the target beneficiary figure could quickly surpass 120 million people.**

**Of immediate urgency is securing the US\$ 4.2 billion funding gap in the coming six months (February to July 2021). Timely, flexible funding is of the essence.** Already, millions of refugees, conflict-affected people and migrants are receiving rations half or less of what they need to survive. Upcoming elections in several countries could trigger insecurity and disrupt access to vital assistance and services. And the window of opportunity to pre-position resources ahead of the rainy season is closing for several critical WFP operations, after which delivering life-saving assistance will become more complicated, and more costly.

This WFP Global Operational Response Plan provides government partners, policymakers, humanitarian counterparts and concerned citizens with an update on evolving needs and WFP response priorities.





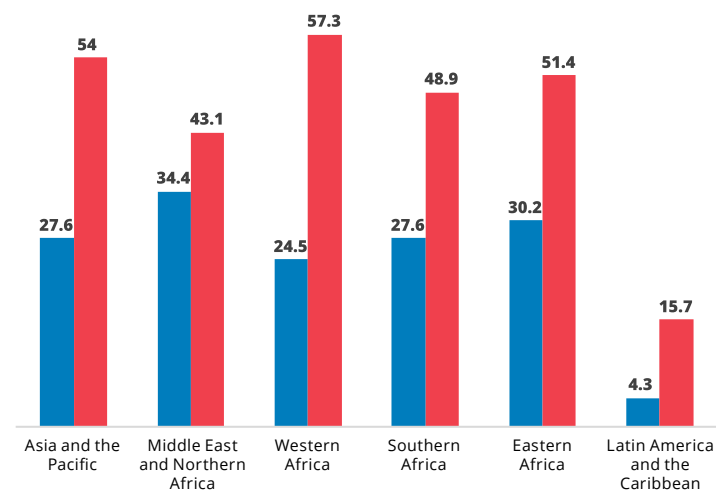
# Section 1: Global Food Security Outlook 2021

## High food insecurity continues into 2021

Across 79 countries with WFP operational presence and where data are available, up to 270 million people are estimated to be acutely food insecure or at high risk in 2021, an unprecedented 82 percent increase from pre-pandemic levels.

## Increasing food insecurity

● Early 2020 pre-COVID-19 (people, in millions)  
● February 2021 Estimate<sup>1</sup> (people, in millions)



Real-time monitoring starting as early as 2019 confirms the deteriorating trend. In nearly all 38 countries where WFP implements real-time food security monitoring systems, data show: an overall deterioration in household food consumption;

increased adoption of crisis level food-based coping, including skipping meals and reducing the quality of food consumed; and increased reliance on crisis or emergency livelihood coping strategies, such as the sale of household productive assets – leaving households more vulnerable in the longer-term.

The alarming food security situation is further confirmed by on-the-ground food security and livelihood assessments, including Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) or comparable analyses in 32 countries. Examples include:

In **Western Africa**, conflict, climate shocks and the compounding economic impact of the pandemic have led to the highest number of acutely food insecure people of any WFP region. Important increases are observed not only in conflict-affected areas, but also coastal countries such as in Sierra Leone, where the number of people in Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or higher increased by 150 percent between December 2019 and December 2020.<sup>2</sup>

In **Asia and the Pacific**, the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic has had a particular effect on urban areas and compounded pre-existing vulnerabilities: in Afghanistan, an important increase in the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or higher is observed, reaching 42 percent of the population; looking ahead, growing insecurity and La Niña could further escalate needs in the months to come.

In **Eastern and Southern Africa**, years of climate shocks, high inflation and conflict have resulted in high needs, including for large refugee populations. The situation is compounded by important funding gaps, requiring ration reductions of up to forty percent. In South Sudan, assessments at the end of 2020

<sup>1</sup> The new February estimate of acute food insecurity is based on updates for 32 countries, IPC/Cadre Harmonisé analyses or comparable data from April to October 2020. Only new data with population coverage comparable to June figures numbers were considered. In alignment with June estimations, remote data was used in the Latin America and the Caribbean region from January 2021. Since the November 2020 estimate, WFP has reclassified its Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan operations from the Middle East and Northern Africa to the Asia and the Pacific region, while Sudan has been reclassified from the Middle East and Northern Africa to the Eastern Africa region. These reclassifications were considered in this table and figures recalculated for previous rounds.

<sup>2</sup> Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phases are described as follows: IPC Phase 1 (Minimal), IPC Phase 2 (Stressed), IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), and IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe/Famine).

project the highest level of people in need of food assistance ever recorded in the country.

In the **Middle East and Northern Africa**, conflict, economic shocks, and reduced funding for humanitarian assistance converge to create conditions for increased hunger: in Syria, recent assessment data shows the highest number of people in acute food insecurity ever recorded, a nearly 60 percent increase compared to the pre-pandemic period.

In 2020, **Latin America and the Caribbean** witnessed the highest relative regional increase in acute food insecurity due to the impact the pandemic on livelihoods and remittances – from 4.3 million in 2019 to 15.7 million today. Increases are observed not only in fragile contexts like Haiti but also confirmed in the Central America Corridor, such as Honduras.

The inter-agency Global Humanitarian Overview released end 2020 predicts a nearly 40 percent increase in people in need of humanitarian assistance this year when compared to pre-COVID targets. Amidst this important increase in needs and global funding gaps, food security coordination will be critical to ensure people are not left behind.

## Famine looming for a record number of people

**As of February 2021, there are more than 30 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Catastrophe/Famine (IPC Phase 5) conditions across the 41 countries where IPC/Cadre Harmonisé (CH) data are available.**

People in IPC Phase 4 rely on humanitarian assistance and safety nets to meet their basic needs. Nearly 80 percent of the people in IPC Phase 4 or above are located in nine countries – each with at least one million people in IPC Phase 4 or 5: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (with 5.7 million people) and Yemen (with 5.1 million people), followed by Afghanistan, Nigeria, South Sudan, Venezuela, Sudan, Ethiopia and Haiti. Additional countries host more than half a million people in IPC Phase 4, including Zimbabwe, Central African Republic, and Honduras. According to IPC projections for 2021, the situation is expected to deteriorate even further in the coming months as many countries enter their annual lean season when acute hunger and malnutrition peak.

**Today, 155,000 people in Yemen and South Sudan are in famine or famine-like conditions – already starving.**

In these communities, people suffer extreme deprivation in access to food, critical rates of acute malnutrition, and higher rates of mortality.

The deteriorating trend is cause for global alarm: in 2020, 132,900 people were in situations of famine, already an increase from 84,500 people in 2019.

In areas where famine is observed, decades of underdevelopment, conflict, as well as climate, economic and political shocks have resulted in extreme disruption to food systems and basic services and impeded access to humanitarian assistance.

## Deteriorating malnutrition threatens lives and longer-term development

The pandemic had massive consequences for nutrition. **Acute malnutrition among children younger than five is estimated to have increased by 14.3 percent**, driving up the number of children with wasting by an additional 6.7 million and increasing the risk of child mortality due to wasting by an expected 10,000 deaths per month.

In 2021, the pandemic, natural disasters and conflict will continue to threaten maternal and child nutrition, impacting access to healthy diets. Child malnutrition rates are sharply on the rise in countries like Yemen, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, and northern Nigeria. In the Central Sahel, projections show an increase of eight percent of malnutrition cases compared to last year, equivalent to 2.3 million malnourished children in need of life-saving malnutrition treatment. In Madagascar, affected by a yearlong drought, the prevalence of life-threatening forms of child malnutrition is also at a critical level. While in Yemen, acute malnutrition threatens nearly 2.3 million children under five in 2021; 400,000 children under the age of five are expected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition and may not survive if they do not receive urgent treatment.

## Drivers of food insecurity and risks ahead in the next six months



### Risk of conflict, political instability and related violence

Conflict is the single most important driver of humanitarian needs and, in some contexts, poses challenges related to humanitarian access, further aggravating the food security outlook. In the months ahead, conflict, instability and violence are likely to persist or further escalate including in areas of the Middle East and Central, Southern and Eastern Africa. Recent, postponed or upcoming elections are likely to contribute to insecurity or unrest, such as in Ethiopia where the conflict in Tigray combined with the upcoming June elections could trigger a further escalation of tensions.



### Economic risks

Global food prices have been rising continuously since June 2020, last month reaching the highest monthly average price recorded since July 2014. COVID-19 induced losses in labour income, the growing public debt burden and a decline in export commodity prices pose additional economic risks. Risks for currency depreciation and rising inflation are high for countries in the Middle East as well as export-dependent countries on the African continent. In Lebanon, the expected removal of subsidies on food, medicines and fuel is likely to exacerbate dramatic inflation in the prices of basic goods. While in Latin America and the Caribbean, the wider economic fallout risks exacerbating pre-existing economic and political instability across the region.



### Natural hazard risks

Years of hurricanes and droughts had already created conditions for vulnerability prior to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. Through early 2021, La Niña will continue to cause extreme weather patterns, impacting food production and displacing populations. Areas of Southern and Eastern Africa are likely to be particularly affected by below average rainfall – as are areas of Haiti which are projected to receive a second consecutive poor rainy season. In the Horn of Africa, WFP is also monitoring the risk of desert locust invasion. Finally, the southwestern Indian ocean is entering the peak of its cyclone activity (January - March).

## Deepening Understanding of Linkages between Food Security and Conflict

In 2021 WFP will leverage its real-time monitoring to deepen analysis of how climatic shocks and stressors affect food security and the risk of conflict in different contexts – including in the Dry Corridor of Central America. The research will complement WFP's ongoing partnership with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Similar research in recent years is allowing WFP to better understand how food assistance programmes can mitigate the risk of conflict, and assist WFP and partners to advance conflict sensitive programming, such as in the Forest region of Guinea where WFP is launching a joint peacebuilding fund project in 2021.



## WFP Corporate Alert System: mapping hazards and triggering preparedness actions

WFP's Corporate Alert System (CAS) brings together early warning analysis into a forward-looking snapshot of operations where conflict, political, economic, climate, and health risks are likely to materialize in the coming months, with potential important impacts on humanitarian needs and/or WFP's ability to deliver. WFP applies a no regrets approach to deploying surge capacity, scaling up technical assistance, and leveraging the Immediate Response Account to

pre-position resources where and when needed. In 2020, the CAS triggered the pre-positioning of essential food and surge capacity ahead of an anticipated above average Atlantic Hurricane Season, saving a lead time of three weeks (or more).

As of February 2021, WFP is actively monitoring 21 current or emerging crises featured on the map below. Additional potential risks "on watch," not pictured, could be elevated for corporate attention in the days and weeks, such as Guinea where new cases of Ebola have been confirmed as of mid-February.



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[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_2291](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_2291)

