Since 1986, WFP has supported the most vulnerable refugees from Western Sahara in meeting their basic food and nutritional needs, as well as maintaining and strengthening their livelihoods.

The specific objectives of the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) are to:

i) Improve the food consumption of the most vulnerable refugees and reduce acute malnutrition and anaemia in children under 5 and pregnant and nursing women.

ii) Maintain the enrolment and retention of refugee girls and boys targeted through school feeding.

**General Food Distribution (GFD):** WFP provides monthly basic dry food entitlements to refugees, comprising 90,000 GFD entitlements plus 35,000 supplementary entitlements. While the composition of the entitlement can vary between five and nine commodities depending on funding, the overall caloric value of around 2,166 kcal per person per day is maintained.

**Nutrition:** WFP combines prevention and treatment approaches to address anaemia, stunting and malnutrition among children under 5, and pregnant and nursing women, targeting 22,500 individuals under the Mother and Child Health (MCH) activity through 29 nutrition centers.

WFP provides oil, sugar and fortified blended food CSB+ to 1,000 malnourished pregnant and nursing women. An additional 6,360 pregnant and nursing women with high rates of anaemia receive Micro-Nutrient Powder (MNP). WFP provides 1,800 malnourished children aged 6-59 months, a special spread fortified with vitamins and minerals (Plumpy’Sup) to treat moderate acute malnutrition.

In addition, WFP targets the monthly provision of a special spread (Nutributter) to prevent malnutrition in 13,300 children aged 6-59 months.

Due to pipeline breaks, most of the above specialized food has not been provided for some months.

**School feeding:** WFP distributes mid-morning snacks, in the form of milk, fortified biscuits, dates (the latter received from in-kind contributions) in 40 schools to 32,500 primary school children. The goal is to maintain enrolment and retention of refugee children. WFP plans to integrate 8,000 kindergarten pupils into this activity in 2016. Due to funding constraints, no fortified biscuits have been distributed during this school year.

### In Numbers

| **90,000** General Food Distribution entitlements |
| **35,000** supplementary general food entitlements |
| **2,166 kcal** per person per day |
| Each person takes home the equivalent of **17 kg** per month |
| **2,248 mt** of mixed commodities are needed on a monthly basis (valued at USD 1.9 million) |
Operational Updates

- Throughout March, the UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) collected data on the ongoing support to the refugees to inform 2017 programming. The results are expected by the end of April 2016.
- Under GFD, 125,000 entitlements of 17kg were provided. The March dry food entitlement constituted of 8kg of wheat flour, 2kg of barley, 2kg of rice, 2kg of beans, 1kg of CSB+, 1kg of sugar and 0.92 kg of vegetable oil.
- Regarding the nutrition activity, no nutrition products were provided to children under 5 due to a pipeline break. The Sahrawi authorities are finalising a screening of malnourished pregnant and nursing women and the results will be shared in April.
- Under the school feeding activity, WFP continued to provide milk to school children. In March, only 40 mt of milk was distributed to cover 13 days, due to the two-week spring holiday.

Challenges

- A healthy WFP pipeline is crucial to ensure refugees’ food security and food basket diversity.
- Nutrition products for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition remain unavailable, due to funding shortfalls.
- Funding constraints have already resulted in the replacement of more costly commodities (chickpeas, peas, rice, and barley) with less costly commodities, including the local procurement of unfortified wheat flour and vegetable oil. These measures reduced the diversity of the food basket, thus jeopardising slight nutritional improvements attained over previous years.
- Funding constraints also limit WFP’s capacity to initiate new complementary activities (resilience), gradually introduce cash-based transfers, and hinder the planned fortification of locally procured wheat flour.

Other Activities:

- WFP is currently working on the rehabilitation of 116 distribution points that were destroyed during the October 2015 floods. The final delivery points are used by several partners to provide humanitarian assistance (food and non-food items). By bringing these items closer to the refugees, they avoid walking long distances and exposure to the harsh desert weather conditions.
- WFP continued to carry out community sensitization campaigns on health, hygiene and feeding practices, in collaboration with Sahrawi Health Authorities, Sahrawi Red Crescent and the Algerian Red Crescent.

Country Background & Strategy

Algeria has been hosting refugees from Western Sahara since 1975. These refugees are located in camps in the harsh, isolated desert environment of western Algeria, where opportunities for self-reliance are limited, forcing them to depend on humanitarian assistance for their survival.

Despite continued negotiations, there is little sign of a durable solution to the political stalemate and encampment remains the only feasible option for the Sahrawi refugees in the foreseeable future. The political status quo is fueling anxiety and disillusionment, especially among the young population, which could lead to increased insecurity and tensions in the sub-region.

WFP started providing basic food support to the most vulnerable refugees upon the request of the Government of Algeria. The 2013 Joint Assessment Mission report confirmed that most refugees from Western Sahara are still highly reliant on humanitarian assistance. The November 2012 Nutrition Survey indicated a slight improvement in the overall nutrition situation of women and children, however global acute malnutrition among children of 6-59 months remains under 8 percent, and chronic malnutrition is at 25 percent.

WFP currently represents the major regular and reliable source of food for the refugees. WFP has been present in the camps since 1986.

Global acute malnutrition: > 8% of children between 6-59 months
Chronic malnutrition: 25%

Donors

Brazil, Cuba, ECHO, Germany, Italy, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, UN CERF, and USA

Contact info: Katharina Meyer-Seipp (katharina.meyerseipp@wfp.org)
Country Director: Romain Sirois
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Algeria