Regional Overview

- WFP estimates that the number of acutely food insecure people in East Africa could increase by 73 percent - from 24 million pre-COVID-19 to 41.5 million before the end of 2020 – in the region consisting of Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Djibouti and Eritrea.

- The triple threat of COVID-19, floods and locusts could have catastrophic consequences for the region. The pandemic strikes at a time when the region is fighting an ongoing desert locust outbreak. FAO projects that the locust outbreak alone could result in an additional 1.5 to 2.5 million people being severely food insecure due to a heightened risk to crops and pasture during the main harvest season from July to September. The region is also experiencing a flooding season, with above-average rainfall expected until September. Recent flooding in the region has affected 2.25 million people and displaced more than 1.1 million people.

- Most of the expected increase in food insecurity consists of populations living in urban areas and hit by the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. In the region, some 50 percent of the urban population live in informal settlements with the majority relying on informal day-to-day employment. Meeting the food security needs of populations in urban slums across the region is a critical enabling factor to contribute to prospects for stability and security in this tumultuous period.

- East Africa hosts 3.3 million refugees and asylum seekers, and 6.2 million internally displaced people. Refugee populations who were previously able to feed and fend for themselves, including many living in urban areas and those working in the informal economy, now face significant challenges. Most of the refugees are not covered by social protection schemes, leaving many families destitute and dependent on humanitarian assistance.

- WFP commends the Governments of East Africa for their effective responses to COVID-19 and thanks them for the constructive collaboration with WFP on the pandemic response. Governments across the region have re-prioritized public expenditure to meet emergency needs and made far-reaching public policy decisions to mitigate the public health effects of the pandemic and balance the socio-economic impact.

- A key priority to mitigate food insecurity in East Africa is to keep borders open. WFP welcomes the collaboration of Governments in East Africa to keep food flowing so people dependent on markets can still access the right food at the right time.
WFP response

• WFP has taken a three-pronged response approach of sustaining critical assistance to people being assisted before COVID-19, scaling up activities to support additional people on the brink of acute food insecurity due to the pandemic and supporting governments and partners in their COVID-19 responses.

• WFP has adjusted existing programmes and worked with governments to meet the increased food security needs of vulnerable populations affected by the pandemic, in particular newly food insecure urban populations in Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Juba, Mogadishu, Kampala and other cities across the region.

• WFP has also facilitated double distributions of food in all countries in the region to minimize large gatherings and scaled up its monitoring systems and assessments to inform targeting and prioritization efforts. WFP has helped increase stock levels at refugee camps to ensure a two-month food availability in or near the camps in the event of lockdowns or quarantining of refugee camps.

• As the lead UN agency for logistics, WFP has provided critical logistical and technical capacity through its supply chain infrastructure and expertise in support of health and wider humanitarian response efforts in the region. WFP’s logistics services provide the backbone for global COVID-19 efforts through a network of hubs, passenger and cargo airlinks, and medevac services that enable a steady flow of humanitarian and health cargo and workers to the frontlines of the pandemic. The first regional passenger and cargo hub to open was in Addis Ababa, which now serves an increasing number of destinations in East Africa including Burundi, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda, Somalia and Kenya.

• In countries where schools are closed, WFP has worked with governments to put in place alternatives, like take-home rations, home delivery of food and providing cash or vouchers.

• WFP has supported the regional leadership of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to analyse and define the overall food security and nutrition needs in the region. A joint response plan is being finalized taking into account not only the new humanitarian needs linked to COVID-19, but also those caused by desert locust outbreaks and recent floods. WFP, FAO and IFAD also work closely with the East African Community to support communities in the region respond to and recover from the pandemic.

• WFP has engaged in assessments and analysis for evidence-based programming. Mobile Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (mVAM) near-real time monitoring has been rolled out in Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, and is also being set up in Kenya. WFP is working with a number of stakeholders in making use of mobile phone-based surveys for desert locust assessment (with FAO), IPC analysis including in urban areas (with FAO, UNICEF and Governments), and joint analysis with UN Habitat on urban vulnerable populations.

• WFP and UNICEF have scaled up their partnership on school health and nutrition in response to the impact of COVID-19 and are targeting 10 million of the most vulnerable children in 30 of the most fragile countries globally.

• WFP has used innovation and technology to respond more effectively to the pandemic in East Africa. Examples include the COVID-19 Fast Track in South Sudan, a 10-week programme organized by WFP South Sudan and the WFP Innovation Accelerator, aimed at finding and fast-tracking solutions to help South Sudan better respond to COVID-19.

• WFP Somalia has developed the e-Shop, an ecommerce/online shopping application. One of its primary benefits is that it allows people we serve to order and redeem their entitlements online through their phones. This platform also includes a ‘home delivery’ element, allowing households to get their entitlements delivered to their homes to minimize unnecessary exposure.

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Funding situation

- For the next 6 months (July-Dec 2020) WFP has a total of US$ 1.7 billion requirements in East Africa, and out of this a funding shortfall for existing operations and new COVID needs of US$ 1 billion.
  
  - As WFP and other humanitarian organizations strive to sustain, adapt and scale-up our programmes in the face of this unique threat, funding is urgently needed for both existing humanitarian responses and new COVID-19 needs.
  
  - WFP is asking our donors to allow maximum flexibility in the way that resources are used so that food assistance can respond dynamically to the rapidly changing situation.
  
- Prior to COVID, WFP planned to assist 21.7 million people in the region in 2020. WFP now plans to assist an additional 3.9 million people over the next six months but urgently needs additional funding as needs will likely peak in the region over the next months as the immediate consequences of COVID-19 unfold, and the lean season exhausts poor families.

- Due to funding constraints, WFP has already had to implement ration cuts for refugees in Uganda, which hosts the largest refugee population in Africa, and in Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. Ration cuts lead to a deterioration in the food security situation of refugees, causing increased malnutrition and stunting in children and other vulnerable groups. There are also grave protection related implications, with an increased risk of refugees engaging in negative coping mechanisms such as theft, child marriages and forced sexual encounters to secure basic food items.

- At global level, WFP is appealing for US$ 4.9 billion over the next six months to carry out this lifesaving work in 83 countries. The new face of hunger requires specialized responses, with an increased risk of refugees engaging in negative coping mechanisms such as theft, child marriages and forced sexual encounters to secure basic food items.

Overview of WFP requirements per country: existing and new COVID needs
(July-December 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Office</th>
<th>Existing Operations</th>
<th>Covid related</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Net Funding Requirements</th>
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<td><strong>286,663,738</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,712,759,141</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,019,354,074</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Country Updates

**Burundi**

COVID-19 is negatively impacting Burundi’s already fragile food security situation. Burundi continues to experience a poor harvest this year due to flooding, landslides and excessive rainfall, which have already compromised the agricultural seasons. The floods have not only impacted agricultural productivity in affected areas, but also cross border trade resulting in economic setbacks for small traders and smallholder farmers. Even during the harvest period, food prices continue to rise. Flooding has also increased the number of displaced people, with more than 60,000 people affected by extensive damage to their assets and crops. These elements, in the already challenging COVID-19 context, risk adding additional pressure on the population, possibly desperate to access food, health care and livelihoods in a politicized environment with reduced access to assistance.

WFP is prioritizing assistance to an expected 50,000 Burundian refugees returning from neighboring countries and 50,000 refugees in camps. However, there is a pipeline break for School Feeding meal activities, and deliveries will only continue in the priority areas of Bubanza and Cibitoke, with appropriate protective measures put in place to minimize COVID-19 contamination. WFP needs urgent commitments to be able to reserve commodities from the WFP GCMF (Global Commodity Management Facility) as well as logistics material to provide the necessary services to Burundians and its partners.

WFP is supporting the Government and partners to implement the National COVID-19 Health contingency plan. WFP provides support to all partners on logistics and ensures the continuation of basic services (IT, connectivity). WFP will support the delivery of equipment and supplies to 1,093 health centres and 93 hospitals, as well as other centres where basic services are delivered. In collaboration with the Minister of Health, WHO (and MSF where appropriate), WFP plans to support the adaptation of health centers to COVID through the construction of isolation units and rehabilitation of storage facilities.

**Djibouti**

To respond to the pandemic, WFP is expanding its operations for the next three months by providing cash assistance to 9,000 vulnerable households in Djibouti city. In-kind assistance will also be provided, focusing on an additional 5,000 vulnerable households in the regions and migrants in quarantine centres set up by the Government (1,500 migrants per month on average). In order to launch this response, 6,100 households affected by the April flash floods and COVID-19 in Djibouti city were assisted with cash transfers for one month. In Djibouti city as well and as part of the COVID response, WFP provided food assistance through cash-based transfers (CBT) to 1,000 households that each had a family member living with HIV (PLHIV). In rural areas, WFP will assist 1,400 households through Food for Assets creation activities in June to address the needs of vulnerable rural populations affected by the locust outbreak and COVID-19. As part of the UNCT Djibouti Humanitarian Response Plan, WFP will continue to extend its support for the humanitarian community by providing logistics services to agencies responding to the crises and coordinating efforts through the Logistics Working Group.

Through its Humanitarian Logistics Base, WFP is availing storage space for medical and non-medical equipment for this response, providing transportation services and coordinating closely with the Government of Djibouti, U.N and NGO partners for the
demand and source planning phases.

**Ethiopia**

With the number of infections in the country steadily increasing, the pandemic threatens to exacerbate the country’s food security situation, which is also being affected by a desert locust invasion that has already devastated livelihoods in many areas, and the displacement of large numbers of people due to climate shocks or intercommunal conflict and violence.

WFP’s first priority in Ethiopia is to sustain its lifesaving programmes under the existing Interim Ethiopia Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) 2019-2020, which contributes to Ethiopia’s 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan, and several other important national strategies at federal and regional levels. The government-led Urban Productive Safety Net Project proposes a substantial scale up of the project: temporary income support (three months) to 555,000 households (over 2 million people) expanding from 11 to 27 of the largest cities. This will target the urban poor in vulnerable employment, including urban poor households with no employed members or no regular income sources; households headed by elderly, chronically ill or disabled persons; households relying on informal income sources; street dwellers including children and homeless; and beggars. The scale-up will cost US$ 111 million.

WFP Ethiopia developed a COVID-19 National and Regional Preparedness and Response Plan that includes support for the COVID-19 Multi-Sectoral Preparedness and Response Plan by the Government of Ethiopia, UN and other partners. WFP has been requested by the Ethiopian Public Health Institute to support 102,200 patients infected with COVID-19 in a period of three months and who will require humanitarian assistance while in isolation or treatment centres with nutrition-dense food rations. Additionally, WFP and the Government of Ethiopia opened the Addis Ababa Humanitarian Air Hub inside Addis Ababa’s Bole International Airport from which COVID-19 supplies, equipment and humanitarian workers are transported by air across Ethiopia and Africa. Three major distributions have been completed so far, and the next round of distributions is on behalf of the African Union’s Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

**Kenya**

Given that the Kenya has the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the region, WFP is adapting its delivery systems to maintain existing life-saving assistance to the most food and nutritionally vulnerable people. WFP continues to work closely with the Ministry of Devolution and the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to support planned relief assistance for urban and vulnerable populations and is part of the Government Interagency Committee on COVID-19 Relief Assistance.

WFP is compensating for shortfalls of in-kind commodities by increasing cash transfers to ensure that refugees receive at least 70 percent of their entitlement for June and July. WFP is initiating a new urban cash response for three months for 63,000 households living in informal settlements within Nairobi, complementing the Government-led COVID-19 emergency response.

WFP is planning an expansion of management of moderate malnutrition to cover urban settlements in Nairobi. WFP is expanding its support to 390,000 vulnerable people in ASAL counties with food and cash assistance to cover seasonality months as well as supporting county governments in identifying and communicating food security support needs and providing technical assistance to the Council of Governors. WFP is undertaking real-time market and supply chain assessments, making available a weekly summary of key trends for external partners.

**Rwanda**

WFP has put in place a number of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in refugee camps. In May, WFP provided all refugees with two months of general food assistance to further minimize risks of refugee exposure to COVID-19 by reducing the number of times refugees gather to collect food entitlements. Normal monthly distributions are planned to resume in July subject to further easing of government restrictions.

In line with development partner support to the Government of Rwanda at this critical time, WFP was requested by the Rwanda Biomedical Centre to provide emergency food assistance to over 16,000 vulnerable people living with HIV in Rwanda, whose livelihoods have been impacted by measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19. WFP is supporting this vulnerable population for one month; additional funding is required to fully meet the government’s request for three months of assistance.

WFP’s activities in support of smallholder farmers and cooperatives were able to continue throughout the crisis, mainly focusing on ensuring market connectivity with buyers in order to safeguard smallholder farmers’ livelihoods and contribute to minimal interruptions to the national food supply. WFP is supporting the establishment of a monitoring framework for the value chain of key selected crops and a nationwide market and supply chain monitoring system and is collecting remote data from key market players. The framework will inform the Government of Rwanda’s COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan. WFP requires funding to expand access to safe food storage equipment to smallholder farmers, as the government’s recovery plan outlines priorities to increase strategic food reserves at household and community levels.

**Somalia**

As COVID-19 was confirmed in Somalia, WFP took early action to As COVID-19 was confirmed in Somalia, WFP took early action to adapt its work in the changed operational environment. Together with partners, WFP quickly mobilized teams on the ground aiming for as little disruption as possible for relief and nutrition activities reaching 1.5 million people with life-saving assistance through unconditional in-kind support and cash-based transfers every month since the outbreak. While livelihood programming was suspended to observe social distancing measures, beneficiaries still received up to two-month cash support to ensure their food and non-food needs were met during this time. WFP provided cash and in-kind transfers for April and May 2020, and now plans to resume its livelihood activities while at the same time ensuring social distancing and hygiene measures in locations allowed by the Somali authorities.

Leveraging Somalia’s expansive and affordable mobile network, WFP Somalia continued to scale up its e-Shop application, which supports food-insecure families redeeming their entitlements by ordering them online through the App. Available on Android, iOS and USSD, the platform is also linked to SCOPE, allowing live, automated data exchange.

Adapting to the COVID-19 context, WFP Somalia expanded the e-Shop application to include a home delivery module, facilitating the implementation of social distancing measures. Originally launched in five locations, it now covers all target locations across Somalia. To date, almost 10,000 successful home deliveries have
been made through e-Shop delivery agents across Somalia with over 59,000 beneficiaries supported.

Despite access constraints imposed due to COVID-19 prevention measures, Berbera Port has remained operational, providing a lifeline for WFP Somalia and Ethiopia and ensuring the delivery of food assistance to key areas of Somalia. Since March over 100,000 metric tons of food commodities have been handled through Berbera Port.

WFP’s role in the COVID-19 response goes beyond its food assistance operations. Since early March, WFP has been working closely with the Government of Somalia, WHO and key health partners providing logistics support through UNHAS and the Logistics Cluster. This included the delivery of medical supplies as well as the transportation of blood samples, medical teams and training personnel supporting all states in deep field locations. Over 400 passengers and 120 metric tons of COVID-19 supplies have been transported throughout Somalia since end-March.

Furthermore, as part of WFP’s socio-economic response to this crisis, we continued building resilience when and where possible, by supporting education through providing take-home rations for school going children who used to receive school meals when schools were open. This ensures business continuity for retailers who deliver to homes through the e-Shop App and continued strengthening of Government capacity and systems for sustainability.

South Sudan

Case management for COVID-19 remains a serious concern in South Sudan due to the degraded health system, paucity of health workers and the lack of medical equipment in the country. At the height of the lean season, 6.5 million people – 55 percent of the population – are already projected to be severely food insecure in the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). With increasing levels of conflict and flooding expected in parts of the country, COVID-19 will only exacerbate the multiple crises South Sudan faces.

WFP’s priority remains to provide food assistance to the most vulnerable populations, while mitigating COVID-19 related public health risks. WFP has prioritized assistance to around 4 million people during this period including populations in areas of IPC Phases 3, 4, and 5, and displaced populations. WFP will extend shock-responsive assistance to an additional 1.6 million of the most vulnerable, market-dependent populations – including 1.1 million people in urban and peri-urban areas and 500,000 people in rural areas.

WFP has so far reached 3.6 million beneficiaries with one to three months’ worth of food assistance. Where possible, families received more than one month’s worth of assistance to preposition food commodities at the household level to avoid large gatherings, minimize risks and promote social distancing.

In an effort to create jobs locally while responding to COVID-19, WFP has partnered with UNDP on the production of face masks through vocational training centres in Aweil, Bor, Juba, Rumbek, Torit and Yambio with thousands of masks being produced daily. WFP is providing food and cash assistance to the tailors, 66 percent of whom are women. WFP has also far supported 150,000 people with two months’ worth of cash transfers through urban safety nets programmes in the capital Juba and Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal State.

Thanks to the support of the US, UNHAS has acquired a dedicated aircraft to support the COVID-19 response in South Sudan. The aircraft is currently funded for six months and is being used to transport samples and COVID-19-related cargo including personal protective equipment. WFP is donating 300,000 masks to frontline health workers.

After a decision on PPE allocation by the inter-agency COVID-19 technical team, 124,000 WFP-procured masks were dispatched to International Medical Corps, MSF Belgium, MSF France, MSF Holland, MSF Spain and WHO across the country. The Logistics Cluster is providing a free-to-user air transport service when needed.

Uganda

To address the impacts of COVID-19, WFP is part of the taskforce managing the national response along-side the Ministry of Health, WHO, UNICEF and other UN agencies. WFP Uganda’s COVID-19 response is captured under the UN Emergency Appeal and Facility for the Response and Impact of COVID-19 in Uganda (which includes the previous WHO-led COVID-19 response appeal). Under the appeal, WFP is supporting the Government of Uganda to provide a one-off food assistance (in cash/mobile money) to over 80,000 urban refugees in Kampala to cover three monthly distribution cycles during the pandemic.

In relation to logistical support under the appeal, WFP is providing storage for the government’s and WHO’s medical equipment as well as warehousing and trucks for the government urban food distributions. In addition, at the request of the government, WFP has constructed a temporary COVID-19 screening terminal at Entebbe International Airport.

Alongside the appeal, WFP Uganda will continue to provide life-saving food and nutrition assistance to refugees in settlements and food insecure people in Karamoja. To limit the spread of COVID-19, WFP has taken preventative measures such as adjusting the frequency of nutrition treatment distributions from every two weeks to monthly and expanding the entry criteria.

Together with UNHCR and partners, WFP has also introduced mitigation measures at refugee food distribution sites including procedures for physical distancing (including limiting the number of people on site at any one time) and Infection Prevention and Control (measures such as strict use of hand washing, disinfection of sites, temperature checks and isolation facilities.

For more information, please contact: Michael Dunford - Regional Director, michael.dunford@wfp.org
Andreas Hansen - Head of Partnerships, andreas.hansen@wfp.org