Operational Context

According to the projections for April 2021 (lean season) IPC results, 9 percent of the population (1.04 million) is facing emergency and crisis levels of food insecurity (phases 3 and 4). However, food security situation remains worse in livelihood zones of “Depression du Nord, Crete Congo Nil and Plaine de Imbo”. Factors, such as rainfall deficit, rising waters of Lake Tanganyika, floods, population displacement in the western provinces, consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and recurrent population movements are aggravating the food insecurity in the country: staple food prices have soared highest in the past five years.

Over 90 percent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Burundi’s preparedness for emergencies and crises is weak and cannot cope with severe shocks such as droughts, epidemics and floods, which often claim lives and undermine livelihoods. Burundi is the second country most affected by chronic malnutrition in the world. According to the SMART 2020, the national average stunting rate is at 52 percent well above the emergency threshold (40 percent). WFP has been present in Burundi since 1968.

In Numbers

- 515 mt of food assistance distributed
- USD 575,060 cash-based transfers under assistance to refugees and resilience-building
- USD 14.76 m net funding requirements for the next six months (March - August 2022)
- 331,343 people assisted in February 2022

Operational Updates

- **Assistance to refugees**: WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 52,732 refugees (23,202 males, 29,530 females, 14,238 children aged 0-59 months and 2,109 people aged over 60 years) with the distribution of 278 mt of in-kind food and USD 571,971 in cash-based transfers (CBT). In-kind food consisted of a half ration of pulses and 29 percent ration of cereals. The CBT was distributed to enable beneficiaries to compensate the reduced rations of cereals and pulses and purchase vegetable oil and iodized salt.

- **Assistance to returnees**: WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 1,830 Burundian returnees (897 males or 49 percent and 933 females or 51 percent), distributing 77 mt of in-kind food. The assistance consisted of hot meals provided at transit centres, and a three-month return package consisting of cereals, pulses, vegetable oil and iodized salt.

- **Resilience**: Under the joint FAO/UNICEF/UNFPA/WFP Community Resilience-Building project implemented in Bubanza, Ruyigi and Cankuzo provinces, WFP provided CBT entitlements amounting USD 3,089 to 70 farming households (350 people) participants who had not received their entitlements during the December 2021 distribution due to beneficiary registration issues. They had participated in assets creation activities in November 2021.

- **Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM)**: In February 2022, MAM treatment activities benefitted 7,270 moderately malnourished pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWGs) and 8,571 children aged 6-59 months who received 91 mt of specialized nutritious foods in Cankuzo, Kirundo, Ngozi, and Rutana provinces. Distributions were coupled with social behaviour change communication (SBCC) implemented by health community workers and targeting the PLWGs, and guardians of children 6-59 months present at the health centers for distributions.

- **Project site visit by Ambassador of Germany to Burundi**: On 16 February, the Ambassador of Germany to Burundi visited a resilience-building project site in Karusi Province. The Ambassador wanted to witness the results achieved by the Germany-funded resilience-building project in that province. With the same funding, a similar project was implemented in Gitega Province.
Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Everyone has access to food

Activities:
- Provide unconditional and/or cash-based assistance to refugees in camps;
- Provide conditional and/or cash-based food and/or cash-based assistance to severely food insecure households among local populations, IDPs, and returnees;
- Provide capacity strengthening to Government and humanitarian partners on early warning systems, emergency food security assessments and analysis, and food security and market monitoring.

Strategic Outcome 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Activities:
- Provide technical support on post-harvest solutions, equipment, and capacity building;
- Provide technical assistance through the logistics sector to the National Disaster Platform and humanitarian partners to improve emergency logistics coordination and supply chain management.

Strategic Result 2: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 6: Government and partner institutions and systems in Burundi have enhanced supply chain capacities by end of 2021.

Activities:
- Provide capacity strengthening through supply chain technical advice and services to the Government of Burundi and to humanitarian and development partners.

For a three-year period (2019-2021), resilience interventions directly covered over 41,000 households which designed/revised household plans that best suited their needs: more than 90 percent of the beneficiaries have established household vegetable gardens meeting technical standards; and each household regularly fertilizes its vegetable gardens and fields using compost it produces. These gardens have helped to improve household dietary diversity, micronutrient availability, and access to nutritious foods.

At the community level, arable land of communities exposed to landslides and water erosion have been protected through trenching; communities have easier access to social services through the rehabilitation of rural roads; agroforestry tree nurseries were established at all project sites and tree seedlings distributed in the communities for the restoration of soil fertility and the protection of the environment. With the use of cash transfers, targeted beneficiaries improved their resilience and nutrition status, as indicated by a ten-percentage-point improvement in the proportion of households consuming adequate food (November 2021 Food Security Outcome Monitoring).

Monitoring

- In February 2022, WFP and its partners received 201 feedback and complaints from beneficiaries through the Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM). Out of these, 187 (93 percent) were resolved, and 14 are currently being addressed. The main complaints included assistance request for resolving issues linked to assistance distribution. In terms of priority, 39 complaints were classified as high priority. They included cases of beneficiaries who did not find their names on distribution lists, delay in food delivery and fraud suspicions.

Challenges

- Food assistance for refugees will soon face operational shortfalls: In April 2022, refugees will receive a full ration of pulses and vegetable oil and 35 percent of the cereal rations, and from May 2022 onward, the operation will face shortfalls in all food commodities. Consequently, the refugees will resort to negative coping mechanisms and the number of people with poor food consumption will increase.

- If the International Development Association (IDA) funding expected from USAID is allocated before April, it will cover the shortfall for 1.5 months, i.e., until mid-June. Title II donation expected from USAID will reach Burundi seven to eight months later. Meanwhile, WFP will need to find other sources of funding to address refugees’ basic food needs.

Donors (in alphabetical order): Burundi, Canada, European Union, France, Germany, Global Partnership for Education, Hilton Foundation, Japan, Kerry Group, Monaco, Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, United States of America, World Bank.

Photo: Beneficiaries of Germany-funded resilience-building project in Gitega standing in line to receive their cash entitlements. © WFP/ireneen Nitwuyezu
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