Operational Context

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country that has been afflicted by successive coups and waves of conflict, culminating in the 2013 crisis with unprecedented levels of violence. Three years after the first peaceful democratic elections (2016), violence continues to grip the country. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people – one in four – are still internally displaced and face chronic food insecurity. Poverty remains stubbornly widespread and high. The country ranks 188 out of 189 countries in the 2019 Human Development Index, with 75 percent of the population living under the poverty line. Basic services are non-existent, and, in many areas, people depend entirely on humanitarian aid for basic services and livelihood opportunities. CAR has a population of about 4.7 million people, more than half of which needs food assistance. Reflecting the gradual deterioration of the humanitarian situation, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased by 21 percent, from 2.4 million in 2018 to 2.9 million in 2019.

WFP operations are focused on life-saving interventions to preserve food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable crisis-affected people. WFP helps communities by distributing food – including specialized nutritious foods, supporting smallholder farmers in restoring and enhancing their productive assets, as well as building resilience to future crises. WFP maintains a crisis response operation while simultaneously supporting recovery programmes in areas of relative security and providing Government capacity strengthening. WFP has been present in CAR since 1969.

Operational Updates

- In November 2019, WFP reached 638,792 people – 63.6 percent of the planned beneficiaries for the month – with a total of 3,258 mt of food and USD 1.2 million through cash-based transfers (CBT) in CAR.
- WFP is at the frontline in responding to the flooding that occurred in October 2019, affecting about 100,000 people across the country, uprooted from their homes. WFP has assisted over 22,810 flood-affected people in Bangui and the surrounding areas with vital food and nutrition support. Ninety (90) percent of the beneficiaries were assisted through cash-based transfers (CBT). Only beneficiaries at a site, located more than 5 km from the nearest market received in-kind food.
- A helicopter has been mobilized by UNHAS to perform assessments of the flooding situation and deliver 1.5 mt of High Energy Biscuits to families in areas affected by floods in the South East of CAR. Based on assessments conducted and in coordination with partners, WFP is preparing to also support the affected communities through food assistance for asset (FFA) activities for the reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed by the floods. WFP will continue to provide lifesaving assistance through general food distribution.
- The security situation in Birao has marginally improved after the clashes that broke out in September 2019. In November, WFP reached 10,038 beneficiaries in the two settlement sites with 100 mt of food for a 40-day ration. With the opening of the new school year in October 2019, WFP resumed its food assistance to school children in seven prefectures. In total, 138,259 school children in 274 schools received 442.9 mt of food from October to November 2019. Due to a lack of funding, WFP could not reach all 321 planned schools.
- WFP continued to provide logistical support to the humanitarian community in CAR. The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), managed by WFP, transported 2,158 passengers and 23.79 mt of essential cargo. The top three most travelled destinations were Bambari, Bri, and Bangassou.
- According to the results of the 2019 National Food Security Assessment, carried out by the Government through the Central African Institute of Statistics and Economic and Social Studies (ICASES), with technical and financial support from WFP, 44 percent of the population (2 million people) are moderately or severely food insecure, of which 300,000 people (6 percent of the population) are severely food insecure. There has been a slight decrease in the prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity, from 50 percent in 2018 to 44 percent in 2019, and this year recorded the lowest number of people in severe food insecurity since 2016. Land access and cultivation has improved significantly compared to previous year – the highest proportion of households reported cultivating this season since 2015. However, the analysis also showed that prices of the most consumed commodities including rice and cassava are on average 10 and 30 percent higher than the same time last year, which might be due to heavy rainfall in September and October, cassava disease having impacted several prefectures and as well as hazardous road conditions. WFP staff presented the results of this assessment to the government, key donors, and partner organizations.

In Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,258 mt of food assistance distributed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>US$ 1.2m cash-based transfers made</td>
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<tr>
<td>US$ 88.4 m six months (December- May 2020) net funding requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>638,792 m people assisted in November 2019</td>
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Gender and Protection

- In November, WFP marked the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence under the theme, “Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!”. The objective was to achieve greater awareness on gender-based violence and motivate prevention through knowledge. WFP CO organized an event with different spoken word performers to raise awareness. Staff members painted the walls of the office with had prints in orange to mark their solidarity with the cause.

Challenges

- The lead time along the Douala corridor – through which 90 percent of the country office’s food items are transported— and structural bottlenecks in the customs clearance continue to negatively affect the upstream flow of food items and transfer to the WFP field offices. In addition, insecurity, the low uplift capacity of transporters, and weak road infrastructure continue to limit the amount of food transported.

- Most of the roads including those to Kaga-Bandoro, Bambari, Bria, and Bangassou where WFP has operations are classified by The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) as high-risk. WFP continues to rely on mandatory escorts from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to move food items on these roads. The delay in obtaining the military escorts and the poor state of roads continue to pose a significant challenge for WFP’s activities in several areas of operations.

Funding

- WFP welcomed a contribution of USD 3.2 million from the Government of Japan to deliver lifesaving assistance to vulnerable people, including women and children in the CAR. Read the press release here.

- Despite generous donor support, insufficient funding levels continued to affect WFP’s efforts to support the population’s access to food and nutritional needs. WFP requires USD 88.4 million in the coming six months (December 2019-May 2020) to continue providing lifesaving food and nutrition assistance to the most vulnerable people in CAR.

Success Story

**WFP provides food assistance in Birao**

Since the clashes in Birao broke out in September, WFP has been providing food and nutrition support to the newly displaced people. This month, WFP highlights the story of Fatimé Tidjani (pictured in the page above. Read the full article here.)

Donors

Belgium, Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Country-Based Pooled Funds, UN Other Funds, USA.