



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP The Gambia Country Brief April 2020



Operational Context

With a population of 2.2 million, the Republic of The Gambia is faced with rising food insecurity, poverty and malnutrition, despite a promising environment for improved growth, stability and partnerships.

Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 is limited, given the high level of vulnerability to food insecurity coupled with the high prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) in children aged 6-59 months and stunting rates above the national average, with a high of 24.9 percent in four districts. 48 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line, and eight percent is food insecure.

The COVID-19 pandemic coincides with and exacerbates a deteriorating food and nutrition insecurity situation which follows an early onset of lean season and successive years of bad harvests. Thus, The Gambia, a net-food importer, has seen a spike in the number of food insecure people across the six regions up to 733,000 persons including about 40,000 urban population reported to have lost jobs and livelihoods. Furthermore, COVID-19 contributes to the increasing acute malnutrition by an estimated 36 percent affecting 58,177 children with a further quarterly increase of 2.7 to 5.6 percent. The affected population will require food assistance until October 2020 when the next harvest is expected.

The Gambia is ranked medium for stunting and wasting and high for underweight according to the WHO Classification of malnutrition with 15.7 percent stunting, 5.8 percent wasting and 10.6 percent underweight (GMNS 2018). WFP has been present in The Gambia since 1970.



Population: **1.1 million**

2018 Human Development Index: **148 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **31% of children between 6-59 months**

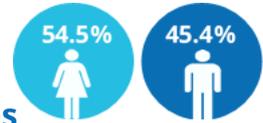
In Numbers

13 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 0 m cash-based transfers made

US\$ 2.1 m six months (April-September 2020) net funding requirements

1,658 people assisted in April 2020



Operational Updates

In The Gambia, 733,000 people in rural and urban areas - approximately 40 percent of the population - require immediate food assistance through October/November when the next harvest is expected. WFP anticipates a rise in food insecurity if access to food becomes limited, as livelihoods are compromised, and local and regional supply chains continue to be disrupted. WFP has repositioned itself for business continuity and maintains its provision of life-saving food assistance, technical and logistical support to the Government's National Health Response plan through its programmes in strategic areas of the country.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, support to the school feeding programmes will continue through much needed take-home rations to children, while following the guidelines of social distancing and hygiene. Following a consultation in all six regions of the country, a joint roadmap for take-home rations (THR) and cash-based transfer modalities to 150,742 pre and primary schoolchildren, was developed with community representatives and is expected to be rolled out in May 2020. The THR will be implemented for the first time in The Gambia, through mothers and women guardians identified to collect the rations on behalf of the children at schools.

On 21 April 2020, the Government of The Gambia received a second consignment of COVID-19 medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) kits from the Jack Ma Foundation. WFP and WHO facilitated the delivery in collaboration with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and Ethiopian Airlines. The donation included 10 ventilators, 3,700 suits and face shields, 37 forehead thermometers, 18,500 swabs, extraction kits and 9,250 pairs of gloves. The much-needed medical equipment will ensure frontline staff and medical teams are protected while responding to the COVID-19 patients.

An additional bi-lateral donation from the People's Republic of China was handed over by the Chinese Ambassador to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 20

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Main photo

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Caption: The Minister of Health (Centre) makes a statement during the handover ceremony of the second wave of medical equipment from the Jack Ma foundation.

Country Strategic Plan (Jan 2019- Dec 2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
49.1 m	5.8 m	2.1 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected populations, including those impacted by seasonal shocks, in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crisis

Focus area: Crisis Response

Strategic Outcome 2: Food-insecure populations including school-aged children, in targeted areas have access to adequate and nutritious food all year

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide food assistance to crisis-affected populations
- Provide school meals to vulnerable pre- and primary school children during the school year, and strengthen capacity of local government to manage school meals programmes as a national safety net

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable populations including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls and other nutritionally vulnerable individuals, in food insecure regions have improved nutritional status by 2023

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide specialized nutritious foods to pregnant and lactating women and girls and children under five to treat and prevent acute and chronic malnutrition and provide training and technical support to national institutions to manage nutrition programmes

Strategic Result 3: Countries strengthened capacities

Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure smallholders including vulnerable households in targeted areas have enhanced livelihoods and resilience to better support food security and nutrition needs by 2023

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide supply chain and market support including Home-Grown School Feeding (HGFS) to farmers to increase productivity and access to markets, complemented by community asset creation through Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)

Strategic Result 5: Countries strengthened capacities

Strategic Outcome 5: National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacity to meet Zero Hunger Targets by 2023.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to the Government on the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy (NSSP), with focus on the gradual handover of the home-grown school feeding programme, resource mobilisation and disaster preparedness and shock response systems

The World Bank has provided to The Gambia equipment worth USD 12 million in the fight against COVID-19. The items include PPE kits, digital X-Rays and ventilators. This will help in enhancing case detection, tracing, and reporting, as well as provide equipment for isolation and treatment, and improve disease surveillance and diagnostic capacity.

Distributions for the moderately acute malnourished (MAM) children aged 6-59 months have been completed in four regions where WFP continued to provide much needed nutrition support (Lower River Region, Central River Region, North Bank Region, Upper River Region) during the month of April, reaching 1,658 children (754 men and 904 women). These distributions were implemented by Community Health Nurses in these regions.

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a disbursement of about USD 21.3 million for The Gambia under the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF). The financing provided under the RCF will help the country meet its urgent balance-of-payments (BOP) needs as well as support the efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 and limit its adverse economic and social impacts.

Partnerships

WFP maintains an active collaboration with government partners, civil society organizations, private sector, academia, development partners and other United Nations agencies, particularly the Rome-Based Agencies - FAO and IFAD, to ensure the harmonization of activities in food security and nutrition. WFP chairs the UN Disaster Risk Reduction group and participates in working groups in key sectors such as education and social protection.

Donors

European Commission, Master Card, Japan, The Government of The Gambia.