**Highlights**

- The latest food and nutrition security analysis (November 2019 Cadre Harmonisé) highlights that for the upcoming lean season (June-August 2020), 4.8 million people in the Central Sahel - Burkina Faso (1.8 m), Mali (1.1 m) and Niger (1.9 m) - are projected to be food insecure (IPC 3 to 5), showing a worsened situation compared to the same period in 2019, where 2.4 million people were estimated to be food insecure.
- Since September 2019, through the activation of its highest corporate emergency response in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, WFP is responding to the food and nutrition needs of highly vulnerable population while providing resilience support where possible. WFP scaled up assistance from reaching 0.9 million in September to 1.4 million by end of December.
- WFP urgently requires USD 125 million from January to June 2020 to carry out its planned operations.

**WFP Net Funding Requirements (January-June 2020)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Net Funding Requirements</th>
<th>USD 125 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>USD 42 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>USD 35 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>USD 48 million</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Situation Update**

- In the past months, an increase in non-state armed groups’ (NSAGs) attacks and incidents of improvised explosive devices were noted across the three countries. The security situation remains highly volatile especially in border areas, and is expected to deteriorate in 2020.
- As a result of increasing number of security incidents targeting both security forces and civilians, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is rising in the region, especially in Burkina Faso. The number of IDPs in Burkina Faso has increased twelve-fold since 31 December 2018, from 47,029 to 560,000 in December 2019. In addition, in 2019, 1,784 schools and 230 health centres across the country have been affected or forced to close down due to rising insecurity.
- In Niger, the state of emergency in the regions affected by conflict, Tillabéri and Tahoua, was extended for three months, following a major attack on 10 December on military base.
- In Mali, the security situation remains tense in northern and central Mali and anger is mounting among local populations, directed against NSAGs for persistent crimes and robberies and against international forces which fail to provide sufficient protection for the local population. Moreover, school teachers are threatening to strike from 21 January unless their demand for improved living conditions is addressed by the Government.
In Burkina Faso, WFP is assisting almost 311,000 people including refugees in official camps in the Sahel region, internally displaced populations (IDPs), and host community members. Assistance was provided through context-specific modalities, including cash-based transfers, in-kind food distribution, and capacity strengthening activities. In December 2019, WFP reached 1.4 million people in the three countries (404,977 in Burkina Faso, 435,300 in Mali, and 570,959 in Niger).

In Mali, 310,680 people including refugees in official camps in the Sahel region, internally displaced populations (IDPs), and host community members received life-saving food assistance. Since November, WFP also managed to carry-out some distributions in Arbinda and Foube, which were highly inaccessible due to insecurity. The moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment and malnutrition prevention programme reached 12,860 children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women (PLW). WFP also provided school meals and take-home rations (for girls) to 43,071 students and 32,496 participants benefitted from asset creation activities and their household members, while waiting for their livelihood activities to take off.

In Niger, overall 307,061 IDPs, refugees and host populations were assisted to cover their immediate food needs, while 80,341 children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) received nutrition support. The school feeding programme implemented in Niger reached a total of 131,669 school-aged children and 66,506 vulnerable populations benefitted from resilience-strengthening livelihood support.

Clustered and Common services

WFP Response

WFP, along with partners, is complementing efforts of the governments of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in addressing the rising food and nutrition needs of vulnerable populations, whose situation is exacerbated by conflicts and recurrent climate shocks. Assistance was provided through context-specific modalities, including cash-based transfers, in-kind food distribution and capacity strengthening activities. In December 2019, WFP reached 1.4 million people in the three countries (404,977 in Burkina Faso, 435,300 in Mali and 570,959 in Niger).

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In Mali, 226,348 IDPs, refugees and host populations were assisted through received relief food assistance. A total of 119,239 school-age children were also assisted through school feeding interventions, while 63,098 children aged 6-59 months and PLW received nutrition support. Lastly, 79,737 people benefitted from asset creation activities.

To address the rising needs, WFP Country offices in the Central Sahel are reviewing their plans for 2020. WFP in Niger has initiated a budget revision exercise for its Country Strategic Plan (CSP 2020-2024) for a 100 percent increase in the emergency response activity, to double the beneficiaries targeted from 0.8 million to 1.6 million. WFP in Mali and WFP in Burkina Faso are also undergoing budget revisions to their CSPs.

Assessments

The latest food and nutrition security analysis (November 2019 Cadre Harmonise) highlighted that nearly 3.3 million people in the three countries were estimated to be food insecure during the 2019 post-harvest period (October-December). This represented an increase of over 200 percent compared to the same period in 2018 and of 38 percent compared to the most recent lean season (June-August 2019), signalling a marked shift from the usual improvement that comes with the post-harvest period. In 2020, humanitarian needs are expected to increase, with the number of food insecure people doubling from 2.4 million during the 2019 lean season to 4.8 million people during the upcoming lean season (June-August 2020).

The recent results of nutritional surveys (SMART 2019) show a persistence of high prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) above the alert threshold (10 percent), particularly in Niger and in Mali (all of its northern regions), while GAM prevalence is estimated at 8.1 percent in Burkina Faso.

In Burkina Faso, preparations are ongoing to conduct an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) in February 2020. WFP is providing technical support as well as training of data enumerators to the Government. Meanwhile, to assess the quality of assistance provided, a qualitative “beneficiary feedback” assessment started in the regions of Nord, Est, Centre-Nord and Sahel. Results are expected by the end of January 2020. A vulnerability assessment is also planned to be conducted for IDPs and host communities during the first quarter of 2020.

Clusters and Common services

In Burkina Faso, seven clusters were officially activated as of 12 December 2019, including Protection and Shelter led by UNHCR; WASH, Education and Nutrition led by UNICEF; Health led by WHO; and Food security co-led by FAO and WFP. A needs assessment mission recommended the activation of a very light Logistics Cluster to improve coordination. The Food Security Cluster (FSC) has completed the selection of the projects for the 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview/Humanitarian Response Plan and 23 projects were selected, covering the totality of requirements for the sector (USD 126 million).

In Niger, on 3 December, the Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion de Crises Alimentaires (DNPGCA) organized a meeting to finalize the National Assistance plan (Plan de Soutien) with participation from different units of the Dispositif including the safety net cell, food crisis and Early-warning system units, the FSC Coordination, WFP, FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture. The FSC in Niger has also completed the selection of projects for the 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview/Humanitarian Response Plan.

In Mali, the FSC continued to actively participate in the development of the Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan set to cover 2020 - 2022.
UN Humanitarian Air Service

- UNHAS operations in Niger and in Mali continue, to facilitate access to hard-to-reach areas for the humanitarian community.
- In December, WFP facilitated humanitarian air services (UNHAS) for 97 organizations in Mali, transporting 1,281 passengers, while 1,096 passengers were transported in Niger.
- With current available contributions, UNHAS operations’ needs are only covered until May 2020 in both Mali and Niger. Resource mobilization efforts are ongoing so WFP can continue providing these critical services to its humanitarian partners in the two conflict-affected countries.

Challenges

- **Access** constraints due to the deteriorating security situation across the Central Sahel continue to affect WFP operations and vulnerable population’s access to food, notably in Burkina Faso and Niger.
- **In Burkina Faso**, increase in number of security incidents is being observed, causing additional movement of population. WFP’s capacity to respond is dependent on ability to ensure that risk mitigation measures are observed to provide safe distribution for beneficiaries by partners, service providers and WFP staff.
- Funding remains one of the main challenges for WFP Burkina Faso’s operations. WFP is facing a critical shortfall in the coming six months to ensure continued assistance based on plans to scale-up the operation. Without additional funding, WFP will prioritize emergency and nutritional assistance to IDPs and host-communities.
- **In Niger**, in Tillabery, humanitarian access still remains prohibited within 50 km of the border and military escorts are mandatory. In the department of Tillía in Tahoua as well, missions are still restricted, with the exception of the refugee hosting area in Intikane. As such, the situation limits the implementation of WFP’s emergency operations at planned scale in these areas. WFP is prevented from reaching 12,500 beneficiaries targeted for emergency activities (7,500 refugees and 5,000 members of the host community) and WFP is not able to reach new IDPs in prohibited areas or those requiring military escort.
- **In Mali**, school teachers are threatening to strike from 21 January unless their demand for improved living conditions is addressed by the Government. WFP’s school feeding activities may be affected should the announced strike take place. WFP continues to monitor the situation closely.
- Due to funding constraints, WFP in Mali had to reduce its ration size to conflict-affected populations and new IDPs by 30 percent since September 2019. Under the nutrition response, WFP is only able to provide critical treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) to children. Without additional funding received, further prioritization of food and nutrition assistance activities will have to be adopted as critical gaps are anticipated starting March 2020.
- Since late December, the coordination of NGOs operating in Ménaka region in Mali suspended all activities until further notice to protest against robbery and criminal attacks targeting NGO members. The suspension of NGO activities affects WFP operations, especially moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment activities implemented by Médecins du Monde. Arrangements are being made to continue MAM treatment through direct collaboration with the public health services.

WFP Funding Partners

**Burkina Faso**: Austria, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Private Donors, Switzerland, UN CERF, UN Other Funds and Agencies (excl. CERF), United Kingdom and USA

**Mali**: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Mali, Monaco, Norway, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UN CERF, UN Other Funds and Agencies (excl. CERF), UN Peacebuilding Fund, United Kingdom and USA

**Niger**: Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Germany, Luxembourg, Monaco, Niger, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UN CERF, UN Other Funds and Agencies (excl. CERF), United Arab Emirates United Kingdom and USA

For further information, visit the Sahel Emergency page