



# WFP Regional Bureau for West Africa

## COVID-19 Situation Report #6

November 2020



*Beneficiary engaged in market gardening, part of WFP's community-based livelihood activities. WFP/Oumar Lo*

### Highlights

- As of end of November, the West Africa region has reported over **232,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases**, of which 215,900 are recovered and 3,535 deaths are reported. The number of active cases overall which was on a steady decline has gone back up in November. Alarming increases in the number of active COVID-19 cases were recorded in Benin, Cameroon, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.
- The results of the 2020/21 Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis conducted in November 2020 suggest that **over 19.4 million people are currently food insecure** in the region<sup>1</sup>, a significant increase (+80 percent) compared to the same period in 2019. This figure is projected to **increase to over 25.9 million people** during the 2021 lean season period.
- In response to socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and other compounding risks in West Africa, WFP significantly scaled up its operations in the region. As highlighted by [WFP Global Update on COVID-19: November 2020](#), **23 percent more beneficiaries** than all of last year were reached between January and September 2020 alone in the region. WFP continues to complement national COVID-19 responses, by providing critical food and nutrition assistance and supply chain and at-demand logistics services to government and humanitarian partners.
- To date, 20 budget revisions were approved, including 12 COVID-19 related ones, to increase WFP's capacity to respond to growing needs. The current allocated resources cover 91 percent of the needs in 2020 (USD 1.84 billion), but the needs still stand high, with net funding requirements of **USD 502.7 million** from December 2020-May 2021.

### Regional Overview

- The number of **COVID-19 cases in the Regional Bureau of Dakar (RBD) region**<sup>2</sup> continued to rise, though on average the increase has slowed down compared to the earlier phase of the pandemic. By the end of November, the region had over 232,000 confirmed cases and 3,535 deaths

reported,<sup>3</sup> an increase of 6 percent and 3 percent respectively since the last [regional COVID-19 situation report #5 \(October 2020\)](#). Recovered cases and active cases each account for 93 percent and 6 percent respectively of the confirmed cases.

- Unlike the last reporting period, the **number of active COVID-19 cases** slightly increased this time overall (by 7 percent) and the **situation deteriorated in 11 countries** out of the 19 countries in RBD region since the beginning of the month<sup>4</sup>. Alarming increases in the number of active cases were recorded in Niger (+1,527 percent), Mauritania (+347 percent), Cameroon (+169 percent), Liberia (+158 percent), Mali (+91 percent) and Benin (+88 percent).
- The recently launched [Global Humanitarian Overview \(GHO\) 2021](#) highlights that in 2021, humanitarian needs will rise again: **235 million people** will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This means 1 in 33 persons worldwide needs help - a significant increase from the 1 in 45 persons a year ago, which was already the highest figure in decades. Conflict, climate change and COVID-19 are said to have created the greatest humanitarian challenge since the Second World War.<sup>5</sup>
- From the RBD region, needs from five countries were highlighted in the GHO 2021, including: **Burkina Faso** (3.5 million people in need); **Cameroon** (4 million); **Mali** (7.1 million); **Niger** (3.8 million); and **Nigeria** (8.9 million). The largest increase compared to the number of people in need in 2020 is for Burkina Faso (21 percent increase), due to deteriorating food security, a consequence of natural disasters and a grave protection crisis, grounded in conflict and insecurity, coupled with the impacts of COVID-19.
- **Worsening conflict and insecurity** in the region, particularly in the Central Sahel, the Central African Republic (CAR), Cameroon and Nigeria, continue to drive humanitarian needs. In Burkina Faso, as of 11 November, **19 schools were reportedly closed** in Seno<sup>6</sup> due to the growing insecurity which is prevailing in the country. This represents around 3,600 students that will not receive school meals during this period of closure. In central Mali, WFP's satellite imagery analysis conducted in November

<sup>1</sup> 17 countries were covered by the November 2020 CH, out of the 19 countries in the RBD region (see list below). The analysis did not include CAR, that is using IPC and Guinea Conakry where elections have resulted in postponement.

<sup>2</sup> **Countries covered by RBD (19) include:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Togo.

<sup>3</sup> Data as of 26 November. **Source:** [COVID-19 Dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering \(CSSE\) at Johns Hopkins University](#)

<sup>4</sup> Since 2 November.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

<sup>6</sup> One of the 45 provinces of Burkina Faso located in the Sahel Region.

shows a **decrease in agricultural activities** due to the deteriorating security situation. In the Mopti region, 20 percent of villages experienced a decrease in cultivated land surface compared to pre-conflict years (2016, 2017), at different degrees of severity.

- The security situation remains extremely volatile, with incidents of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) targeting civilians, internally displaced persons (IDPs), humanitarian workers and convoys, which continue to threaten the continuity of WFP's operations in the region. During the month of November, **continued attacks on schools** in Cameroon (North-West and South-West regions) were reported, as well as **security incidents involving WFP-contracted trucks** transporting food commodities in Cameroon and in Nigeria. **Raiding on farms** on 28 November by NSAG elements in Borno State in Nigeria, reportedly killed over 86 farmers while a dozen of others, mostly women, are still missing and possibly abducted<sup>7</sup>.

## Monitoring of food security situation

- The impacts of conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change are seriously affecting food systems in the region. The results of the 2020/21 Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis conducted in November 2020 suggest that over **19.4 million people are food insecure** in 17 countries across the RBD region covered by the analysis<sup>8</sup> between October and December 2020. The number of food insecure populations is projected to **increase to over 25.9 million people** during the June-August 2021 period. Overall, these figures are significantly higher for the current period (October-December 2020) compared to the same period in 2019, when 10.8 million people were estimated to be food insecure (80 percent increase). For the June-August 2021 period, the increase is less pronounced, but still significant (13 percent).



*Returnees, displaced people and most vulnerable local populations supported in the Far North of Cameroon winnowing black-eyed beans. WFP/Glory Ndaka*



## Resource Mobilization

- To address the growing needs in the region, numerous **budget revisions** (BRs) to the country strategic plans (CSPs) and interim country strategic plans (ICSPs) were undertaken

by country offices. As of 30 November, 20 budget revisions were approved<sup>9</sup> and 12 are COVID-19 related (partially or fully), with Ghana, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal and Sierra Leone introducing **new crisis response strategic outcomes to support their pandemic response**. The total budgetary increase is USD 1.07 billion against previous budget (mainly attributed to an increase in crisis response related to COVID-19) and the total direct beneficiary increase is 6.5 million people. Additional budget revisions are upcoming or are still under revision/review in eight country offices<sup>10</sup>, which will further increase the needs for 2020 and 2021 in the region.

- Since the previous regional situation report and in November, budget revisions were approved for Mali<sup>11</sup> and Burkina Faso. **Mali's third budget revision** to its CSP (2020-2024) approved is partly COVID-related and reflects adjustments to current operations to account for an increase in needs and address the negative impacts of COVID-19, while sustaining an integrated resilience approach. Meanwhile, **Burkina Faso's fifth budget revision** to its CSP (2019-2023), introduces the Logistics Cluster (activity 10) which aims to optimize logistical resources to enhance the humanitarian response. **Togo's one-year ICSP** (2021) was also approved in November. Through implementation of the ICSP in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, WFP will seek to enhance its position as an enabler and leverage its global expertise in emergency preparedness and response, efficient food systems and supply chain to support the Government of Togo.
- The needs for 2020 were high, amounting **USD 1.84 billion** as of November (2020 needs-based plan). This was an increase of over 30 percent since the start of the year. It is expected that the current allocated resources will cover more than 90 percent of these needs until the end of the year, but challenges will continue in 2021. Several country offices have been providing reduced rations since July/August 2020 due to funding constraints, and risk having to further downscale operations. **From December 2020 to May 202021, USD 502.7 million are urgently needed** for the region so all country offices can implement critical food and nutrition assistance and capacity strengthening at planned scale. Approximately 80 percent of needs in this period are for critical crisis response, followed by resilience building and root causes activities.

## WFP Operations

- WFP continues to step-up its capacities to complement national **COVID-19 responses**, through unconditional in-kind food assistance and cash-based transfers (CBTs) in both urban and rural areas to help mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In-kind food assistance and cash-based transfers to COVID-19 affected populations continued in November in Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia, while school feeding activities and

<sup>7</sup> Reported as of 30 November.

<sup>8</sup> Same as footnote 1.

<sup>9</sup> 20 approved BRs so far are: Benin (BR2); Burkina Faso (BR4, BR5); Cameroon (BR4); CAR (BR4, BR5); Ghana (BR1); Guinea (BR1); Liberia (BR1); Mali (BR1, BR2, BR3); Mauritania (BR1); Niger (BR1); Nigeria (BR1); Sao Tome and Principe (BR1); Senegal (BR1); Sierra Leone (BR1, BR2); The Gambia (BR2).

<sup>10</sup> Under review/revision or upcoming in: Burkina Faso (BR6), CAR (BR6, upcoming in early 2021), Côte d'Ivoire (BR1), Guinea Bissau (BR1, upcoming in early 2021), Niger (BR2), Nigeria (BR2), Senegal (BR2), Sierra Leone (BR3).

<sup>11</sup> Approved in October 2020.

resilience-strengthening activities are further resuming after being suspended or reoriented due to COVID-19 related restrictive measures.

- In **Cameroon**, WFP coupled November and December cash transfers and reached 35,878 beneficiaries (100 percent of targeted). WFP also distributed in North-West regions cash entitlements in urban and peri-urban areas to 7,444 pregnant and lactating women and girls (99 percent of targeted), in complement to in-kind food.
- In **Chad**, WFP finalized in November the COVID-19 response as part of the National Response Plan for food security. As of 30 November, more than 433,000 people benefitted from the second and last distribution of food across eight provinces (100 percent of targeted).
- In **Guinea**, two COVID-19 related food assistance programmes which were temporarily interrupted because of the presidential election resumed in November. The second round of distribution, targeting 15,120 households, started in Conakry at the end of the month, while food distribution targeting 736 households in Boke and Kankan under the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) also resumed and reached 1,182 households (12,563 beneficiaries).
- In **Liberia**, WFP continued to support the Government-led COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme (COHFSP) and in November, WFP and partners reached 19,679 households (98,395 beneficiaries) in Montserrado County. While countrywide household enumerations are ongoing, the implementation of the COHFSP has experienced severe delays in the beneficiary registration process.
- In **Niger**, as part of the Government-led COVID-19 response, WFP is supporting the scale up of the National Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) programme. WFP plans to reach over 670,000 beneficiaries through the ASP COVID-19 response in 2020, in partnership with the Government, World Bank and UNICEF. Targeting of beneficiaries in all regions has been completed, with cash distributions ongoing in all regions, except in Agadez region, where distributions will be carried out in January.
- In **Sierra Leone**, targeting process is ongoing by WFP in collaboration with partners for the implementation of unconditional three-months emergency assistance (through in-kind or CBT) to over 51,000 beneficiaries across the most food insecure rural and urban districts. Moreover, WFP continues to complement food commodities provided by the Government to individuals under quarantine and receiving COVID-19 treatment, by providing dry rations (rice, pulses and oil). Lastly, WFP in collaboration with the National Aids Secretariat is planning to provide a one-off nutritional support in the form of cash transfer to 540 most vulnerable people living with HIV to meet their food needs.
- In **The Gambia**, WFP in partnership with the Government began cash transfers, targeting 5,355 food insecure households (42,840 individuals) in urban regions of Kanifing Municipality, Banjul, North Bank and West Coast. WFP's food assistance will cover the needs for November and December, complementing the Government's Social Safety Net Cash Transfer programme which targets rural regions. Moreover, preparation is ongoing for the rice distribution

(5,500mt of rice donated by the Government to WFP) to support families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- In **Togo**, local food procurement and preparations as part of the Limited Emergency Operation targeting 252,500 people (50,500 households) in five regions highly affected by COVID-19 are ongoing.



*A lesson in progress in a primary school in Sao Tome and Principe. WFP/Jorcilina de Almeida Correia.*

- With further reopening of **schools** in the region, school feeding activities resumed in Cameroon (South-West region)<sup>12</sup>, CAR, Côte d'Ivoire<sup>13</sup> and Senegal. More schools are expected to reopen between December and January for the 2020/2021 academic year, including in Guinea, Liberia, Mali and Nigeria.
- Moreover in **Liberia**, WFP is currently preparing the launch of a CBT pilot that will provide 1,000 school children and their families with a monthly commodity voucher or a mobile money transfer (monthly transfer value of USD 15), to support targeted beneficiaries' access to nutritious foods. Meanwhile in **Senegal**, CBTs to schoolchildren's households were completed, as well as the distribution of take-home rations for nearly 70,000 households in **The Gambia**.
- **Relief food and nutrition assistance to conflict-affected populations**, including IDPs, returnees, refugees and vulnerable host populations, is ongoing in Burkina Faso, CAR, Chad, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria, providing double rations whenever possible, in line with COVID-19 preventive measures.
- **Resilience activities** are further resuming, after being suspended or reoriented due to the COVID-19 restrictive measures. In **Burkina Faso**, community-based asset creation activities restarted in November in the Centre-Nord, Est, Nord, and Sahel regions. In **Niger** as well, WFP resumed community food assistance for asset (FFA) activities for 237,000 beneficiaries in resilience sites, including new sites in Diffa for 25,000 beneficiaries under the joint WFP and UNICEF resilience and social cohesion project. All COVID-19 preventives measures are in place.

## Latest regional situation reports

WFP Regional Bureau for West Africa COVID-19 Situation Reports: [#1 \(28 May 2020\)](#) | [#2 \(30 June 2020\)](#) | [#3 \(5 August 2020\)](#) | [#4 \(August 2020\)](#) | [#5 \(October 2020\)](#).

<sup>12</sup> Since the attack in the schools in the South-West in early October, WFP had been assessing the security situation before allowing resumption of the school feeding programme. Activities resumed on 28 November in the South-West and

3,115 beneficiaries (92.3% of planned) from six schools received take-home rations.

<sup>13</sup> Although schools reopened in September, school canteens were temporarily suspended recently due to the social unrest of the presidential election.