



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP The Gambia Country Brief March 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.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) officially declared the Coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. The Gambia soon after recorded its first case on 17 March 2020. 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 6 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.

WFP in The Gambia faces a critical funding deficit for the prevention of malnutrition programme during the lean season which is key during this period as the COVID-19 state of emergency has resulted in an increase in food insecurity. The lack of resources will lead to a complete suspension of this activity. WFP will prioritize assistance to pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and crisis response (during the lean season, from June to October), to vulnerable populations and nutritional support to children 6-23 months.

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**

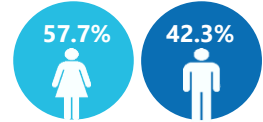
In Numbers

431.32 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$79,383.3 cash-based transfers made

US\$ 3.05 m six months (March-August 2020) net funding requirement

115,375 people assisted in March 2020



Operational Updates

- To date, The Gambia has recorded four confirmed cases of COVID-19 and one death. In a bid to contain the spread of the virus, the country has closed its airspace and land borders effective 23 March 2020 for a period of 21 days.
- To support preparedness efforts, The Gambia received a donation of personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and medical supplies donated by the Jack Ma Foundation, directed through the African Union Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (ACDC) in collaboration with WHO, WFP and Ethiopian Airlines, each leveraging their comparative advantages to ensure that the consignment is delivered to all 54 member States. On 28 March 2020, The Gambia received a large consignment comprising 20,000 test kits, 100,000 face masks, 740 sets of protective clothing and 1,000 protective shields arrived at Banjul International Airport on Ethiopian Airlines. The WFP Representative and Country Director, Ms. Wanja Kaaria expressed gratitude to the Jack Ma Foundation and recognized their commitment in support to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On 23 March 2020, WFP Gambia commenced its Business Continuity simulation exercise. The primary objective of the exercise is to ensure that the WFP country office continues to provide uninterrupted support to critical programmes, beneficiaries and partners while ensuring staff health and safety.
- The Gambia Government announced the closure of all schools (including religious schools) for a period of 21 days starting 18 March 2020. The country office school feeding unit has continued to work closely with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to share the various interventions that WFP will be undertaking, including communications support, and possible take-home-ration to children. This will be achieved through various communication mediums including posters, radio and TV to sensitize communities on hygienic practices and adhering to WHO guidelines. WFP will be providing support in this communication outreach.

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Main photo

Credit: ©KebbaJallow/WFPTheGambia

Caption: WFP receives 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)
25m	5.8 m	3.05 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 (FAA)

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

- WFP is co-leading the Logistics and Safety cluster with Ministry of Health, in support of the government’s COVID-19 response plan. Between 25 and 28 March 2020, WFP, in partnership with WHO and the Ministry of Health conducted a nation-wide rapid logistics capacity assessment of health facilities, border points, quarantine centres and ferry crossing points. Fumigation of identified treatment and isolation centres has also taken place. The data has been analysed and translated into a report that showcases the strengths, areas of improvement, gaps as well as recommendations for solutions.
- WFP participated in the March 2020 Cadre Harmonisé that took place from 9 – 13 March 2020 and played a key role in strengthening the analysis and enhancing the results. The results revealed that 81,976 people (about 3.34 percent of the population) are currently vulnerable to food insecurity. This may increase to 136,586 during the lean season, if no intervention is forthcoming. The majority of this vulnerable population are in predominantly agricultural regions of The Gambia but are still confronted with food insecurity. 10 percent of the Central River Region, 8 percent of the Upper River Region and 8 percent of the Lower River Region population were food insecure. Furthermore, it is important to note that the impact of COVID-19 is not factored in the analysis although figures are projected to rise in light of the effects of the pandemic.

Partnerships

- WFP was awarded USD 16 million multi-year funding by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP), as technical entity and implementing agency of the grant, with the Africa Development Bank as the financial and supervising entity a year after the first application in March 2019.
- 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.