

Addressing Food Security in Fragile and Humanitarian Contexts

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Session 4: UN system support to the implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)

Day 3 (Wednesday, 26 May 2021)

Hunger is on the rise, with famine a real threat in several fragile and humanitarian contexts



10 worst food crises in 2020 in terms of the number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3-5)

1. Democratic Republic of the Congo
2. Yemen
3. Afghanistan
4. The Syrian Arab Republic
5. The Sudan
6. Northern Nigeria
7. Ethiopia
8. South Sudan
9. Zimbabwe
10. Haiti

Source: The Global Report on Food Crises (May, 2021)

155 Million people in **55** countries

experienced acute malnutrition in 2020 – 20 million more than in 2019

34 million people, up from **28.4** million in 2020, are teetering on the very edge of famine (IPC 4/Emergency) and the slightest shock will push them over into famine. This number has risen from

28.4 million in 2020. Approximately **155,000 people** are in the grip of famine-like conditions in South Sudan and Yemen

WFP estimates that **272** million are already at risk of becoming acutely food insecure in 2021 in the 80+ countries where it operates

The primary drivers of acute food insecurity can be prevented or managed

Conflict accounted for nearly two-thirds (64 percent or 99 million people in 23 countries) of the **155** million acutely food insecure; **economic downturn for 26 percent** (40.5 million in 17 countries); and the **impacts of climate change for 10 percent** (15.7 million in 15 countries).

The perennial threat of poor rainfall and adverse weather events is also likely to continue driving acute food insecurity in many countries, with drought risk in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia alongside the threat of desert locust infestations in East Africa disrupting agricultural production – as La Niña leads to climate extremes in several regions.

The **food systems in African countries are particularly vulnerable due to several compounding factors**, including conflict, and existing country-level economic crisis and disasters such as the desert locust outbreak in Eastern Africa, which is currently spreading to other regions. These drivers had weakened countries' coping capacity even before COVID hit and are continuing to so today.

Most vulnerable to the adversities of the pandemic are people working in the informal economy, particularly women and youths who are overrepresented in the informal sector, and whose livelihoods will be further impacted by reduced remittances, trade and income from sectors such as tourism, contributing to increasing poverty and food insecurity levels.

Increasing food security will imperil efforts to eradicate poverty

In **2020**, over **15.8 million children under 5** in the **55 countries** facing the worst food crises were suffering from wasting. Nearly half of these (7 million) lived in the 10 worst food crises (by the number of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above). The situation was particularly concerning in northern Nigeria, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, which accounted for a third of all wasted children in food-crisis countries.

The **nutrition situation was particularly critical in countries affected by protracted conflict**. Of the 10 countries/territories with the highest prevalence of wasting, eight (Yemen, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Niger, Somalia, Chad, northern Nigeria, and Burkina Faso) are affected by protracted conflict. **The 10 countries experiencing the worst food crises in 2020 were particularly affected by nutrition and health service disruptions mostly due to COVID-19 restrictions.**

In six out of the nine countries with data, vitamin A supplementation dropped nationally by at least 25 percent. The drop exceeded 50 percent in Afghanistan, northern Nigeria and the Sudan. In the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, the implementation of wasting treatment programmes dropped by 25–49 percent.

200 million school children are currently missing school meals, a crucial, widespread safety net that supports children and their families.

Governments and development partners are focused on lives and livelihoods, social protection measures humanitarian needs and build resilience for the recovery phase and beyond

Governments in the 'high-risk' countries and their partners recognize the complexity of the present crisis and the need for context-specific responses. **Many have adopted a “middle of-the-road” approach that combines prevention with some level of economic stimulus.**

Specific actions include: i) food assistance, including food distribution and cash-based transfers; ii) supply chain and logistics augmentation; iii) social protection, particularly shock-responsive safety nets and basic income support; and iv) remedial fiscal and monetary measures, including budget support, debt service relief, and the repurposing of funds and programming.

A report utilizing the UN Secretary General's approach to framing recommendations for additional actions called for interventions along the following four focus areas:

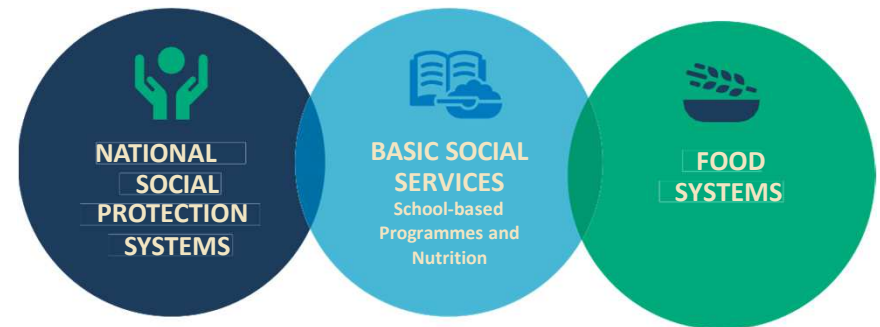
1. saving lives and livelihoods - humanitarian food, livelihood and nutrition assistance; worker protection, keeping trade corridors open, expanding monitoring systems, and ensuring the most vulnerable are taken care off;
2. putting into place social protection measures – expansion and tailoring of assistance as well as strengthening the health system;
3. promoting sustainability - transforming food systems, and satisfying the conditions for a more inclusive, green and resilient recovery; and
4. strengthening policies and institutions for a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery to strengthen country and regional preparedness capabilities and capacities are important to reduce losses resulting from future emergencies and contribute to prosperity

WFP's contribution to achieving zero hunger and eradicating extreme poverty: Critical action must address immediate humanitarian needs and build resilience for the recovery phase and beyond

WFP has developed a Medium-Term Programme Framework to help governments address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. The three programme pillars are:

National Social Protection Systems: WFP will help governments to adapt, design and implement social assistance interventions that respond to COVID-19 and to strengthen shock-responsive social protection systems. This offer draws on decades of experience in safety net programming in crisis contexts and technical expertise in analysis, assessment, programme design, in-kind and cash delivery systems and accountability to affected populations.

Food Systems: The COVID-19 pandemic is placing significant stress on all components of food systems (production, trade and distribution, and consumption), threatening the food security and livelihoods of millions of vulnerable people. Sustaining, protecting, and improving food systems and markets during the crisis is vital to reduce economic and food insecurity risks to communities, especially the most vulnerable, and enable a quicker and more inclusive recovery.



Basic Service Delivery: WFP can support governments to adapt and ensure essential nutrition and school-based services, protecting children and women, building human capital and enabling recovery.