



WFP Global COVID-19 Response Plan

08 April 2020

The COVID-19 outbreak has led to widespread movement restrictions, disrupted supply chains and economies, triggered a global health response, and is severely threatening humanitarian operations. The UN Secretary-General has warned that the COVID-19 pandemic is the worst crisis the world has faced since World War II. WFP has developed a Global Response Plan framed around three immediate priority objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Sustain WFP Operations
- **Objective 2:** Enable the Global Health and Humanitarian Response
- **Objective 3:** Track Impacts and Inform Decision-Making

WFP's first priority is to sustain its life-saving programmes under existing Country Strategic Plans and Humanitarian Response Plans. The timing is particularly concerning: a high number of countries are approaching their annual lean season when access to food is severely constrained and malnutrition rates peak; the hurricane and monsoon seasons are looming; and a number of already fragile countries have elections this year.

WFP's response plan is aligned with the Global Humanitarian Response Plan:

Global Humanitarian Response Plan	WFP Global Response Plan
Contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and decrease morbidity and mortality.	<p>Sustain WFP Operations</p> <p>Enable Global Health and Humanitarian Response</p> <p>Track Impacts and Inform Decision-Making</p>
Decrease the deterioration of human assets and rights, social cohesion, food security and livelihoods.	
Protect, assist and advocate for refugees, internally displaced people, migrants and host communities particularly vulnerable to the pandemic.	

Context

A disease outbreak was first reported in China in December 2019, subsequently identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a coronavirus. As the number of cases and death toll rose rapidly and crossed borders, on 11 March 2020 WHO declared this novel coronavirus a pandemic. As of 1 April 2020, 203 countries and territories are affected. On 27 March, WFP declared COVID-19 a Global Level 3 Response.

With regards to the economic impact, according to ILO, five to 25 million jobs will be eradicated, and the world will lose \$860 billion to \$3.4 trillion in labour income. UNCTAD projected a 30 to 40 percent downward pressure on global foreign direct investment flows. Fuel and food prices (especially rice, pulses, and palm oil) have recorded volatility, and governments around the world have adopted protectionist policies with regards to the production of medical equipment.

The COVID-19 crisis has already disrupted vital WFP school meal programmes for 12 million children across 50 countries and is risking humanitarian supply chains as nations block exports of food, border closures severely hamper overland transport of commodities, disruptions to the



Response Plan Objectives

Objective 1: Sustain All WFP Operations

WFP has active humanitarian operations in 83 countries, providing essential food security, livelihood and nutrition interventions to as many as 100 million people in fragile situations. Monitoring finds that operations are a lifeline for food and nutrition security, provide stability and strengthen the resilience of households, contribute to prospects for peace through community-based approaches, and support the manufacturing, retail, and transport sectors. The populations WFP works with are the most vulnerable and will be most impacted by COVID-19.

Mitigating risks to supply corridors

Borders are closing, manufacturing is being disrupted, staple food prices are increasing, and many countries are banning food exports. This means the window to maximize sourcing and secure food stocks, is shrinking. Securing a sufficient buffer of resources is critical to sustain operations, as well as to ensure WFP is positioned to be able to shift resources and respond to changing circumstances as required.

Specifically, WFP is:

- **Forward purchasing** three-month-stocks of food and ensuring three-month financing capacity to support cash transfer programmes.
- **Positioning resources** in or near the most fragile countries in order to reduce the risk of disruption.
- **Reinforcing critical corridors** with assets and technical assistance to ensure the continued flow of humanitarian cargo.

To secure these resources, **WFP urgently requires USD 1.9 billion** to be frontloaded against WFP's existing plan of work for Category 1 and 2 countries. Needs are rising rapidly and COVID-19 is spreading into the most vulnerable communities and disrupting food systems. Additional resources will be required as these needs arise and will be captured in budget revisions to Country Strategic Plans and to Humanitarian Response Plans.

Sustaining, Adapting and Scaling Up Programmes

As measures are put in place to reduce the spread of the virus, WFP must adapt its ways of operating to ensure uninterrupted assistance is provided to those who need it most. WFP is actively engaging with governments and partners to ensure that life-saving assistance continues – safely – throughout lockdown periods. This includes:

- **Reducing congestion** at food distributions and retail shops by staggering attendance, redesigning layouts to allow for physical distancing, adapting distribution cycles and increasing the number of distribution sites and retailer shops.
- Putting in place **health mitigation measures** at distribution sites and retailer shops including health screening on arrival, handwashing stations and educating communities on prevention measures.
- **Providing alternative means** of food assistance, such as food packages, commodity vouchers or take-home rations, to compensate for disruptions to cooked meal programmes (including school feeding).



- **Adapting market-based approaches** including shifting between modalities (food, cash, vouchers), working with retailer partners to secure inventory, expanding online platforms (e-shop) and exploring mobile retail shops and/or delivery options.
- **Adapting school meals programmes** for the 12 million children out of school and missing school meals due to school closures worldwide. Also working with UNICEF on a “back to school” programme providing cash or food to households and strengthening school services to incentivize returns.
- Leveraging the WFP outreach platform to **deliver health information** leaflets (or non-literate alternatives), hygiene and sanitation items on behalf of health partners.
- Where appropriate, WFP is planning to support governments to adapt and **expand social protection** to address new or growing needs, particularly in urban areas and among migrants, seasonal agricultural workers and other vulnerable groups. WFP has a mix of implementation capacities and partnerships in place to design, deliver and ensure effective large-scale cash transfers to meet essential needs.
- WFP with the Food and Agriculture Organisation is leveraging the food security cluster/sector platform to **alert to gaps in assistance** or additional needs which arise, build consensus and common advocacy on needs, and to ensure common health and safety standards in distributions.

Objective 2: Enable the Global Health and Humanitarian Response

WFP will extend its supply chain infrastructure, assets and partnerships to serve the wider humanitarian and health community, providing the logistics backbone of the global response. To ensure a coherent operational response to the COVID-19 pandemic and on the direction of the UNCMT, the Supply Chain Inter-Agency Coordination Cell (SCICC,) has been established. The multi-agency SCICC will ensure ‘line of sight’ to supply chain requirements ensuring COVID-19 needs are prioritized within the wider humanitarian response. Where militaries are mobilized and/or peacekeeping operations are present in-country, WFP, in close coordination with OCHA colleagues, can provide dedicated expertise to coordinate and minimize any duplication or gaps, such as supporting the humanitarian community in the use of national military and civil defence assets where appropriate, and coordinating the use of foreign military assets where required.

Upstream:

Amidst disruptions to commercial air and sea traffic, port restrictions, and border closures, WFP will support the delivery of the health and humanitarian response from point of supply to points of entry in country. Services reflect WFP’s global mandate for logistics and emergency telecommunication, UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD), and aviation services.

To this end, WFP will provide:

1. **Hubs and Staging Areas:** WFP will establish four strategic consolidation hubs in Guangzhou, Liege, Dubai and Atlanta. These international hubs will be connected to regional staging areas in:
 - Latin America: Bogota or Panama or as appropriate
 - Asia: Subang, Malaysia or Bangkok, Thailand - as appropriate
 - West Africa: Dakar, Senegal and/or Accra, Ghana – as appropriate
 - Southern Africa: Johannesburg, South Africa
 - East Africa: Nairobi, Kenya or Addis Abba, Ethiopia – as appropriate
 - Middle East: Doha, Qatar or Dubai, UAE or Cairo, Egypt - as appropriate



These are strategically located to serve the countries prioritized in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

This network of strategically located hubs will serve as cargo consolidation points, accepting and preparing all cargo for prioritized, coordinated forwarding to the regional staging areas and/or final destinations. Where possible, WFP will build upon the existing UNHRD network – and leverage in-house emergency telecommunications expertise, assets and partnerships to equip the hubs. Both at international and regional level, hubs will be sufficiently equipped to handle medical, dangerous air cargo as well as temperature-controlled items.

- 2. Air and Sea Cargo Services:** WFP will set up air transport links between strategic consolidation hubs and regional staging areas – and onward to final destination countries where required - to ensure the sustained movement of life-saving humanitarian and medical cargo to existing and new humanitarian operations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. WFP will set up bi-weekly cargo flights between the strategic hubs and regional staging areas. There will initially be 30-35 flights per month from each strategic hub with estimated cargo capacity of 100 mt per flight. A medium-sized air cargo fleet will be positioned in the regional staging areas to provide onward cargo movement to priority countries, if commercial services are disrupted. For slow movement cargo, and specialized cargo that requires transport by sea, WFP shipping services will be availed.
- 3. Passenger Air Services:** WFP will strategically position five medium-sized passenger aircraft (150-180-seater) to transport humanitarian and medical staff between international and regional hubs to critical countries of operation. Such air services will be used to fill the gap where commercial airlines are unavailable. If commercial services are further constrained, a regular international passenger service from Guangzhou, New York, Rome and Geneva to areas of operations will be established.
- 4. MEDEVAC Services:** WFP will set-up MEDEVAC services for the humanitarian and health community based out of 7 regional hubs serving field operations across the globe. As part of its global response, WFP will establish a network consisting of strategically located bases/hubs covering:
 - Latin America: Mexico or Panama or as appropriate
 - Asia: Subang, Malaysia or Bangkok, Thailand - as appropriate
 - West Africa: Dakar, Senegal and/or Accra, Ghana – as appropriate
 - Southern Africa: Johannesburg, South Africa
 - East Africa: Nairobi, Kenya or Addis Abba, Ethiopia – as appropriate
 - Middle East: Doha, Qatar or Dubai, UAE or Cairo, Egypt - as appropriate

In these locations WFP will construct dedicated COVID-19 field hospitals to care for humanitarian personnel affected by the virus and unable to receive appropriate care at their duty station or in their home country. Field hospitals will be staffed and managed by WHO and health partner staff. From these locations WFP will also deploy specially modified aircraft, with sufficient medical equipment and trained personnel on board, certified to safely transport humanitarian and health personnel with a confirmed Covid-19 infection. An overall fleet of 14 aircraft will be positioned globally (2 in each hub) to implement this service and is augmentable based on need. There will also be overland ambulances positioned at each of the COVID-19 field hospitals.



5. Supply Chain Planning Services: Supply Chain planning support services in specific cases.

Downstream:

WFP may be further requested to provide services at country level, such as: storage and handling, landside cargo transport, goods and services procurement through UNHRD, common booking and management services for light passenger vehicles.

Provision of any country-level services will be on a bilateral service basis – and captured through revisions to WFP Country Strategic Plans and Humanitarian Response Plans.

Objective 3: Tracking Impacts and Informing Decision-Making

WFP is conducting operational monitoring of global operations, global needs, changes to markets and supply chains, restrictions to the movement of cargo and people as well as security and early warning analysis.

WFP has set up a cross-functional analytical cell to monitor the implementation of the WFP global plan. The cell is responsible for operational data analytics, streamlining data requests and prioritising data collection – creating an analytical product that provides a real-time global overview of WFP operations for monitoring, prioritisation and decision making.

WFP is also assessing the interactions between the pandemic and pre-existing food, nutrition, socio-political, economic, environmental and security fragilities, and the implications of these for humanitarian action. This analysis is available to the wider humanitarian sector and complements the daily analysis the team conducts on non-covid issues.

On behalf of the community, WFP will provide a far-reaching, real-time, remote, technology-based platform to track evolutions in food security, health indicators, and market functionality in priority vulnerable countries. Real-time monitoring will be complemented with early warning and security analysis and will be visualized through static and web-based platforms and made available to partners, including through the [hunger map](#) live platform.

Currently, WFP has real-time remote monitoring systems in 17 countries. An initial USD 4.8 million has been requested under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan to scale-up these systems and expand to an additional 11 countries. This would cover half of the countries of the Global HRP and all of WFP Category 1 countries; additional funding will be required to further scale-up.

Combined, this information will be used to inform needs-based revisions to WFP's Country Strategic Plans, Humanitarian Response Plans, and government's own National Response Plans.

Requirements

Given the unprecedented nature of the emergency, requiring investments at international, regional and cross-country level, WFP has established a COVID-19 Special Account. USD 15 million from internal resources has been advanced to kickstart initial surge support to secure



humanitarian corridors for WFP operations, set the groundwork to establish international staging areas, and support field operations. Of this, USD 5 million has already been allocated for staff health and hygiene needs.

Additional requirements:

- Given the need to ensure ongoing operations, WFP is pre-positioning three-month stocks of food through key supply corridors while further ensuring three-month financing capacity to support cash transfer programmes. **The estimated cost for this critical effort is USD 1.9 billion and reflects requirements under WFP's existing plan of work.** It corresponds to 70% of the three-month needs-based plan for countries in prioritization categories 1 and 2. Donors with forecasted contributions are urged to accelerate confirmation of contributions and provide WFP with early and specific indication of future support that can be used for WFP to advance financing and for immediate planning. WFP also urges partners to provide the maximum level of flexibility possible, during times of heightened uncertainty.
- **WFP is appealing in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for US\$350 million** for investments needed to adapt delivery mechanisms, enable the health and humanitarian response by providing upstream supply chain and logistics services, access to medical services, and real-time remote vulnerability monitoring. As the situation evolves and demands rise, requirements are likely to increase.

Additional country-level needs (both food security and services) will be incorporated through revisions to WFP CSPs and reflected in relevant country-based appeals and are not included in this Response Plan. WFP Country Offices have been approached to support government responses through CBT support, expansion of social transfers, or social protection systems (Philippines, Dominican Republic, East Timor). Work is ongoing to understand needs beyond technical assistance and if CSP adjustments are required.

The below table provides a summary of the initial investments required to deliver on the commitments made through WFP CSPs and through the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. The shaded section reflects the WFP requirements included in the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. These requirements are a baseline and will increase as needs increase. WFP is already receiving requests from governments to support their country-level response to COVID-19. Such requests – including food assistance to populations in quarantine, adapting social safety nets, logistics support and sourcing of critical items – will only increase.

Purpose	Requirement
Sustain WFP operations by forward purchasing and positioning food/CBT	USD 1.9 billion from existing programme of work Request to donors with forecasted contributions urged to confirm, and frontload resource requirements already captured in priority CSPs/HRPs.
Enable the health and humanitarian response by providing upstream supply chain and logistics services, access to medical services, real-time monitoring, and investments to adapt delivery mechanisms	USD 350 million new requirements
Additional country-level needs (food security and services) generated by the crisis	Not budgeted. Will be captured in Budget Revisions to CSPs.



WFP Portion of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID - 19

Service	Cost (USD)
Establish, equip and manage international consolidation hubs and regional staging areas	61.4 million
Air and shipping cargo services	149 million
Passenger air services	53.8 million
Medical Evacuation Services (MEDEVAC)	53.6 million
Infrastructure and construction of treatment centres	18.5 million
Real-time remote data collection and visualization	4.8 million
Critical investments required to safely deliver operations and services	8.9 million
TOTAL BUDGET	350 million