



WFP's Response to Global Food Crisis

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WFP's 2008 programme aims to meet the needs of 74 million hungry and crisis-affected people around the world. Due to the rise in food prices, the World Bank has estimated that approximately 100 million people could fall deeper into poverty and may require support to meet their basic food and nutritional requirements. WFP is supporting a phased approach, involving many partners, to respond to the evolving crisis, including:

1. Immediate steps to meet urgent needs, prevent malnutrition and stabilize the situation
2. Medium term measures to boost agricultural production
3. Longer term efforts to build a conducive policy environment for pro-poor growth

The food price issue provides a new opportunity to renew efforts for coordination with partners. Meeting urgent needs and seizing the opportunity to revitalize agriculture and economic growth requires a coherent global response involving governments, the United Nations system, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. With sufficient resources and building on existing capacities, WFP is ready to play its part within a broader response framework in the following ways:

1. Immediate – Crisis response and Safety Nets

Poor households that already spend the bulk of their income on food are responding to the high prices by eating less, buying less nutritious food, cutting expenses in health care and education, selling assets and incurring additional debt. The result is that vulnerability is increasing as poor people mortgage their future to meet current needs. Women and children are of particular concern. A critical challenge for WFP is that price-related food insecurity will expose both rural and urban populations to greater degrees of hunger. WFP has substantial experience of conducting food assistance responses in rural areas but strategies for food insecure urban populations will require considerable adaptation of existing technical and programmatic support to governments.

Governments will need to launch emergency assistance and enhance safety net programmes to meet the urgent needs of those who are unable to produce or purchase sufficient food. These activities may include school feeding, mother and child nutritional support, assistance in the form of food, vouchers or cash transfers and employment programmes (food or cash for work). Food security and nutritional surveillance must be scaled up to identify and address needs early. In cases of civil unrest or rising malnutrition, targeted food distributions may be needed. Under the partnership umbrella, support to provide seeds and tools for low-income farmers for the next planting season may also be part of the crisis response.

WFP can help governments and partners cope with urgent needs by –

- Deploying experts to help identify who is most affected and where they are, through assessments and vulnerability analysis
- Supporting food security and nutrition surveillance
- Advising governments and partners on policies and actions that affect access to food
- Implementing targeted general food distributions to affected populations
- Scaling up WFP-supported safety nets, such as school feeding, supplementary feeding for mothers and children, employment and cash voucher programmes, resettlement grants for returnees.

- Providing a platform for agencies to expand nutrition or food security activities, such as additional take-home rations of nutritionally fortified food for younger siblings of school children
- Facilitating logistics arrangements for governments and partners to move non-food items (e.g. seeds and fertilizer)

2. Medium term – Boost Agricultural Production

The increased demand for food provides a renewed opportunity for WFP to direct its programming efforts to support the expansion of agricultural production and simultaneously fight rural poverty.

WFP can help governments and partners to boost agriculture production by –

- Supporting disaster mitigation and contingency planning
- Lending logistics support to government and partner agencies
- Purchasing food to meet its programmatic requirements in ways that benefit low-income farmers
- In the context of WFP's assistance, mobilizing public and community works for land and water development (including irrigation), rural roads, construction of crop dryers and stores, pest management etc.

3. Longer term – Policy Reform

Governments will need to review and reform existing policies to mitigate the current and potential future impact of high food prices and help poor rural and urban households benefit from the opportunities that the increased demand for food creates for farmers. This includes establishing new food and cash-based social protection systems, reviewing subsidies and tariffs, addressing land reform challenges, leveraging private sector investment and implementing sustainable mechanisms to deal with international price fluctuations.

WFP can assist governments and partners with policy review and reform by –

- Advocating for the food security needs of the poor and vulnerable
- Establishing and supporting food security and vulnerability monitoring systems
- Advising on ways to strengthen national food distribution programmes and safety nets
- Piloting and supporting programming, procurement, logistics and food fortification innovations
- Sharing experiences across countries and regions
- Championing sound and sustainable policies with World Bank, UNDP, FAO, IFAD and other partners

WFP Current global programme	
Beneficiaries	74 million
Number of countries served	78
Tonnage of food	4.4 million MT
Total cost	USD \$4.3 billion