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World Food Programme

Immediate Response: Ukraine Crisis

Highlights

- WFP in Ukraine is preparing to scale up its response to reach 120,000 individuals through a new Emergency Operation (EMOP). Beginning in November, the EMOP will cover critical food needs during cold weather months through April 2015.
- On 2 October, WFP received a formal request from the Government of Ukraine (GoU) for additional food assistance in support to affected communities in the eastern region. This follows the GoU appeal to the international community for some US\$1.6 billion in assistance for the recovery of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.
- The EMOP builds on WFP's ongoing assistance in eastern Ukraine. Through its NGO partners, over 77,000 daily rations have been distributed to IDPs in transit, centres, or communal residences, as well as vulnerable populations trapped in conflict zones. Of this total, 17,500 daily rations were distributed in Luhansk and Donetsk cities.
- Food voucher distributions have begun in northern Donetsk oblast. To date, nearly 5,000 IDPs have already been provided their entitlement — sufficient for one month's food needs per recipient.

In numbers



400,000 + displaced

1) Current Immediate Response

28,000 total individuals targeted

18,000 receive food¹

10,000 receive vouchers²

3 Months duration
(through 14 November, 2014)

Immediate Needs: US\$1.4m

2) Scale-Up Emergency Op.

120,000 individuals targeted

40,000 receive food rations

80,000 receive vouchers/cash

6 Months duration
(1 November 2014— 30 April 2015)

Total Cost: US\$17m

Situation Update

- The agreed ceasefire of 5 September remains fragile. Security issues continue to limit humanitarian access in areas of highest need — including Donetsk and Luhansk cities.
- Food insecurity remains a concern, primarily in the frontline areas surrounding major cities within Donbas.
- Access to food in the market is the major challenge for affected populations. With the coming winter, and increased need for household expenditures to go towards cold weather preparation, assistance is required to help families afford food costs.
- Concurrent with a family's stretched budget, the price of food has continued to rise since January this year and overall is comparatively more expensive than last year.
- Additionally, protracted conflict has led to heightened unemployment and a serious lack of hard currency.

1. Equivalent of 90,000 daily rations

2. Value equal to ~US\$450,000

WFP Response

- WFP's immediate approach is designed to reach the most vulnerable internally displaced families (IDPs) and other vulnerable and conflict affected individuals. Assistance is provided mostly in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts – areas most affected by months of fighting — as well as neighboring oblasts of Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovs'k and Zaporizhzhia. Distributions under the IR EMOP are provided as a one-off benefit, including either in-kind food or food vouchers, as appropriate.
- Locally purchased, mostly ready to eat food parcels are being provided to cover immediate needs. The current package (called an Immediate Response Ration—or IRR) is composed of canned meat, fish, and vegetables, as well as buckwheat, biscuits, jam and tea, and supports one person for five days. During the upcoming winter months, WFP is increasing the food basket to feed one person for a 30 day period — including heightened daily caloric requirements for colder weather (2,600kcal/person/day).
- WFP has initiated its food voucher program this week. The food voucher—valued around US\$45/person/month— provides access to food items available in local supermarkets. The voucher assistance will allow families to prioritize other needs, including winterization activities, with their own resources. By mid-November WFP will have provided food vouchers for 10,000 individuals under the IR EMOP. For the scale up EMOP, the C&V modality will reach 80,000 individuals — each for a three month period. Vouchers, or cash, will address short-term food needs in more secure IDP hosting areas with adequate food supply and where markets are functioning.
- In order to better gather food security information, and as such comprehensive data is unavailable, WFP has begun conducting a rolling assessment throughout the five eastern oblasts. This data will be used to refine targets of future WFP programming. Results will be made available to share throughout the humanitarian community.

Partnerships

- WFP is coordinating with the Government of Ukraine's State Emergency Services (SES), the Ministry of Social Policy, UN agencies and NGOs with operational presences in the eastern regions of Ukraine. Humanitarian access to cut off areas has been and will continue to be negotiated (whenever possible) through local NGOs.
- Following an official endorsement of the SES, food has been distributed by the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) as part of WFP's Immediate Response operation. Other WFP in-kind distributions continued with the assistance of Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA).
- The voucher assistance is being carried out through NGOs with an operational presence, including past coordination with the Ministry of Social Policy; for this initial round, WFP is partnering with international NGO People In Need (PIN).
- For all upcoming programs, WFP is continuously developing new relationships with potential cooperating partners. New agreements are built based on needs and access to priority areas.

Resourcing Update

- Current and new operations are worryingly underfunded. Ongoing activities are entirely reliant on an internal WFP loan and total needs for the upcoming six month project, valued at US\$ 17 million, are only five percent resourced. With such a shortfall, WFP warns of the potentially dangerous strain this places on an already overburdened government and host community, as well as the likelihood of prolonged food insecurity for the most vulnerable individuals affected by the conflict. Resources are urgently required to position food and establish cash/voucher systems while families prepare for the winter.

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