



# WFP Lesotho Country Brief

## Highlights

- In March, WFP assisted 176,367 food-insecure people with cash and food. 53 percent of the beneficiaries were women.
- WFP tracking indicates that the average maize prices decreased from M74/12.5kg in January to M72 in February. However, although lower than in 2016, the prices are 18 percent higher than the five year average.
- The food security situation is gradually improving as manifested in the decline in negative coping strategies, according to WFP monitoring reports.

## WFP Assistance

Country Programme Lesotho	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
CP 200369 (2013-2017)	41.5 m	23 m (56%)	2.5 m (84%)

\*April - September 2017

The Country Programme (CP) comprises two components: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD); and Nutrition support and HIV support. The CP supports preparedness for primary education among pre-school students and assists the Government's efforts in the prevention and treatment of undernutrition. The CP also tackles malnutrition with strategies that improve the socio-economic status of communities. The strategies include: implementing supplementary feeding programmes, advocacy for increased national budget for nutrition, strengthening community linkages, implementing sustainable livelihood interventions, scaling up research and information sharing as well as building strong partnerships. To address insecurity caused by the El Niño drought, WFP has intensified its fundraising activities to continue the CP's long term objectives.

School Meals Programme	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)
Trust Fund (TF) 200771: (2015-2017)	15.5 m	8,000 (0%)

Through the School Meals Programme, which is fully funded by the Government, WFP provides 180,000 children in 921 primary schools with morning porridge and a lunch meal of maize with either beans or peas. This helps boost micronutrients and improves the learning environment, increasing enrolment and attendance and reducing dropout rates. With regards to the El Niño-induced drought, the meals serve as an effective safety net for children from food insecure families. WFP also supports the Government's education strategy of free and compulsory primary education.

Support to drought affected population	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
PRRO 200980 (June 2016-Dec 2017)	26.7 m	11.4 m (43%)	9.6 m (91%)

\* April - September 2017

## GENDER MARKER 2A PRRO 200980

With 709,000 of the 1.5 million rural population in need of urgent food assistance, the Government of Lesotho declared a state of emergency in December 2015. Through an Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP), March-August 2016, WFP reached 22,115. Under the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), WFP has assisted more than 170,000 food insecure people since October 2016. The plan is to assist 263,000 people by December 2017 through conditional and unconditional cash and food based transfers.

## In Numbers

**709,000** people affected by the drought  
**263,000** people targeted by the PRRO

**176,367**  
People Assisted under the PRRO in February 2017



Main Photo

Credit: WFP/Thabo Maretlane  
Caption: A beneficiary of WFP's relief assistance programme carries the Maize meal in Botha Bothe district.



March 2017

## Operational Updates

- Following the advice by the Government to all humanitarian agencies providing relief assistance not to distribute cash and food in May due to the ongoing electoral process, WFP will provide two months cash rations in April 2017. Snap elections for Members of Parliament are scheduled for 3 June 2017. The final food and cash assistance under the relief component will be distributed after the elections.
- Due to inadequate stocks, WFP will provide one month ration of food comprising of maize meal and vegetable oil, without pulses.
- Plans are under way for FAO to distribute 5,830 shade nets to the drought affected people assisted by WFP under the relief component, in Botha Bothe, Thaba Tseka and Berea districts. The nets were procured through the UKaid joint programme.
- Targeting and beneficiary selection for orphans and vulnerable children to be assisted under the USAID/PEPFAR project is under way in five districts. However, the exercise will be suspended in April as advised by the Government due to the ongoing electoral process.
- Implementation of food assistance for assets activities has started in Mohale's Hoek district for 850 food insecure people. Plans are under way to identify people in Quthing district to be assisted in May.

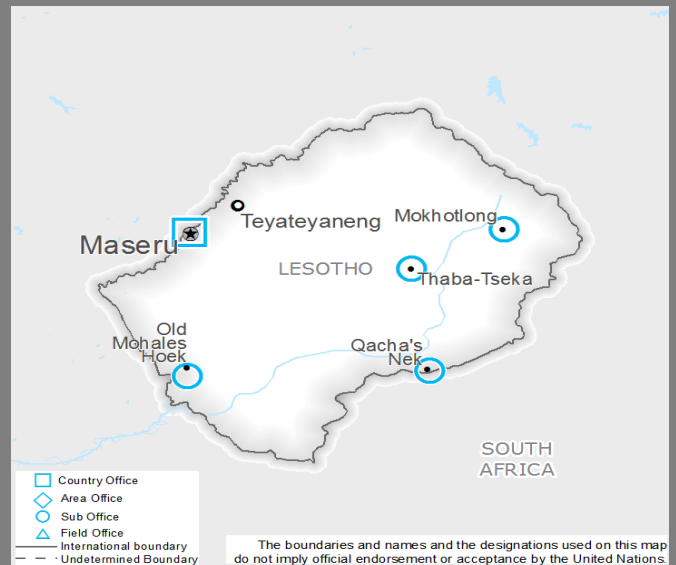
## Challenges

- Implementation of the e-card solution initially experienced technical glitches due to a mismatch of beneficiary details. Hence, some food insecure people received their entitlements late.
- The implementation of the resilience based activities started late due to inadequate funding. The available funding will cover activities in Mohale's Hoek and Mafeteng districts for a period of six months. WFP will intensify efforts to mobilize resources.



*A group of women attending to vegetables in Botha Bothe district. The green harvest has contributed to the reduction of the negative coping strategies in Lesotho.*

## Country Background & Strategy



More than half (57 percent) of the population live on one dollar per day. Lesotho's GDP is USD 2.2 billion while its national gross income per capita is USD 1,500 (World Bank). Revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) contributes a significant proportion to Lesotho's national budget. The Government allocates seven percent of its national budget to safety nets such as school feeding, pension for the elderly, child grants and cash for work.

The population's high vulnerability is exacerbated by recurring climatic hazards, including droughts, early frost and a low performing economy. As a result, 29 percent of people below the age of 35 years are unemployed. The country is also characterized by an extremely high HIV prevalence rate (25 percent) and has to provide care for more than 250,000 orphans, most of whom lost their parents to AIDS. Life expectancy stands at 49 years.

Agriculture, which contributes seven percent to the GDP, is a major source of livelihood for 80 percent of the population living in rural areas.

WFP supports the Government's efforts to build the resilience of communities frequently affected by climatic hazards, with the view to stimulate agricultural production.

WFP has been present in Lesotho since 1965.

Population: **2.1 million**

2015 Human Development Index:  
**161 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

## Donors

The Government of Lesotho, Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, CERF, ECHO, World Bank, GFDRR, WFP Multilateral and private donors

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