

# Donor Bulletin - September 2008

## High Food Prices

### US\$286 MILLION NEEDED TO HELP 11.2 MILLION HUNGRY VICTIMS OF HIGH FOOD PRICES

Djibouti, Ghana,  
Guinea, Haiti, Liberia,  
Mauritania, Mozambique,  
Nepal, Occupied  
Palestinian Territories,  
Pakistan, Senegal,  
Tajikistan, Uganda and  
Yemen

*"Without full funding of  
WFP emergency  
requirements, we risk again  
the spectre of widespread  
hunger, malnutrition and  
social unrest on an  
unprecedented scale."*  
UN Secretary General,  
Ban Ki-moon



### GROWING HUNGER AND DESTITUTION

- High food and fuel prices have deepened the vulnerability and hunger of nearly 1 billion people. This includes 850 million people already targeted for hunger reduction under the Millennium Development Goals, but who now face an even steeper hill to climb out of poverty and food insecurity. It also includes at least 130 million people who have been literally priced out of the market by high prices. The situation is particularly dire for the people who live in countries that import a large proportion of their food needs, that grapple with strong inflationary pressures and that are susceptible to natural disasters and conflict.
- Poor families that were already spending more than 60% of their incomes on food are responding to high prices by eating less - and less well - cutting outlays on health care and education, selling precious assets and taking on additional debt. They are literally mortgaging their future to meet today's pressing needs, with long term consequences for their health and well-being.
- Children and women are particularly vulnerable. Women, who need a well-balanced diet during pregnancy and after childbirth, are sacrificing their food intake to cater for their families, compromising their own health and that of their newborns. Children, notably those under two years, are being deprived of protein, fats and micronutrients essential for healthy growth and development, causing irreversible damage.
- In many countries, poor urban residents see food in shops and markets but can no longer afford it. In others, governments are struggling to import enough to feed their people. Pastoralists are discovering that sales of vital livestock fetch very little grain on the market, while elsewhere rural farmers can hardly afford to buy the seeds and fertilizers they need to grow their family's food. Also, in too many countries, high prices have led to social unrest.
- Mitigating the impact of high prices and seizing the opportunity to revitalize agricultural and economic growth requires an urgent and unified response involving governments, the United Nations system, Bretton Woods international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. WFP's role within this coherent global approach is to help governments meet the call of hunger through new and enhanced social safety nets, thereby allowing time for longer term initiatives to bear fruit. In this context, WFP is focused on saving lives, protecting livelihoods and preventing malnutrition, while seizing opportunities to enhance food security.
- In March 2008, to help cover the increased costs of purchasing commodities and transport services, WFP launched an appeal for US\$755 million. The appeal did not address the needs of additional beneficiaries. The donor community responded promptly and generously.

### As of 1 September:

**Total 2008 Funding Needs: US\$5.6 billion**

**Total Contributions Received: US\$3.4 billion**

**Current 2008 Shortfall: US\$2.2 billion** (including the US\$286 million mentioned above)



World Food  
Programme



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### Our role does not end here

- WFP has launched a first wave of projects targeting 11.2 million people who have recently fallen victim to the global scourge of high food prices. We must help provide them with the nutritional support they need to escape hunger and malnutrition. Our responses support national strategies to tackle the crisis, drawing on WFP needs and vulnerability analyses and building on existing expertise and capacities. The responses are also being developed in close partnership with fellow UN agencies, the World Bank, and other international and non-governmental organizations. Participatory and community based-initiatives, particularly those involving women, children and marginalized and vulnerable groups, are fully prioritised.
- In confronting the crisis, WFP is using the full complement of programme tools outlined in its recently-approved Strategic Plan. We must consider not just the amount of food people are able to access, but also the quality of that food. WFP will extend the availability of nutritious food products, tailored to the needs of young children, mothers and other particularly vulnerable groups. As well as including new and improved commodities in our rations, we are promoting the local production and procurement of nutritious foods, and introducing cash and voucher programmes.
- To reach the 11.2 million people, in this first wave, WFP requires a further US\$286 million.

### Key features of WFP's response include:

- Extending school feeding to children during school holidays, and providing take-home rations to the families of vulnerable children.
- Providing supplementary rations of nutritious food to malnourished children and women while also extending food assistance to their families.
- Expanding food for work programmes in support of government and FAO initiatives to boost agricultural production and build farm-to-market roads and other community infrastructure.
- Establishing small-scale food reserves to enable communities to cope with price and other shocks, and supporting initiatives that help subsistence farmers become surplus producers.
- Helping small farmers produce and sell nutritious food for use in WFP and government safety net programmes.
- Increasing food assistance in urban areas where food is unaffordable and civil unrest is a concern.
- Expanding voucher programmes to enable people to obtain food in markets and making cash transfers to support work activities, including urban youth employment projects.
- Providing monthly food rations to families who can no longer access the food they need.

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### Emerging needs

- As of 1 September, US\$960 million had been confirmed in response to WFP's March appeal to donors to help mitigate the impact of high food prices. Of this, US\$104 million has been allocated towards the initiatives outlined in this bulletin. A further US\$286 million must be secured to ensure their implementation.
- Additional needs supported by assessments underway and fuelled by high prices are emerging in many other countries. This second wave of needs will be featured in future editions if a WFP response is necessary.



*"We can defeat hunger. We can achieve global - and local - food security. The world knows how to do this. High food and fuel prices now threaten to short-circuit this potential and undo many hard-earned gains. Only by pulling together in the spirit of interdependence can we respond strategically to this challenge."*

Josette Sheeran, WFP Executive Director

## Innovative and Responsive Programmes

The following WFP activities, planned in concert with concerned governments and other partners, build on ongoing emergency and hunger-reduction programmes in countries hard-hit by food prices.

**Djibouti:** In this drought-prone country, which imports almost 100 percent of its food, WFP will provide monthly rations to 135,000 people in urban and rural areas and nutritious supplements to 5,500 children under five at particular risk of malnutrition. A voucher programme is also under consideration. (Shortfall: \$13 million)

**Ghana:** WFP will partner with the government to expand Ghana's flagship national school feeding programme using locally-produced nutritious food to reach 20,000 children and their families in three disaster-prone food deficit northern regions with the poorest nutritional and educational indicators. A further 115,000 people in the three regions will benefit from nutritional safety nets and cash transfers. Many families in the northern regions have been reduced to one meal a day as a result of the lean season. There have been isolated reports of families eating poisonous, wild roots. (Shortfall: \$30 million)

**Guinea:** WFP will provide assistance to almost 600,000 people in Middle, Upper and Forest Guinea by expanding school feeding to reach hungry families during summer holidays and Ramadan, and providing supplementary rations to malnourished children and women attending healthcare centres. It also plans to pilot new products to treat malnutrition and is launching voucher-based support in urban areas. A recent assessment shows that many Guineans are now resorting to negative coping strategies in the face of deepening food insecurity. (Shortfall: \$19 million).

**Haiti:** Civil unrest remains a serious concern in Haiti, where WFP has fast-tracked efforts to reach as many hungry people as possible. Building on an initial response following food riots in April, WFP will expand nutritional, educational and socio-economic safety nets in urban and rural areas, benefiting 2.5 million people. This includes food support to vulnerable families through schools and health centres, as well as targeted distributions and food for work in urban areas. (Shortfall: \$19 million)

**Liberia:** WFP plans to assist 220,000 people as part of a joint UN/Government food security and nutrition programme. Activities will be concentrated in and around Monrovia and include school feeding, nutrition, cash- and food-for-work programmes. Liberia imports more than 70% of its food. (Shortfall: \$9 million)

**Mauritania:** WFP will assist 550,000 people through expanded general food distributions and supplementary rations for young children. It will also establish village food reserves. Mauritania imports more than 70% of its food. High prices have increased the number of food insecure people by 30%. (Shortfall: \$6 million)

**Mozambique:** WFP will target 160,000 people through social safety net programme for school children, mothers, infants, toddlers and HIV/AIDS patients. Local production of nutritionally-enhanced foods and cash/voucher-based programmes are also part of the assistance package. Increasing food and fuel prices are threatening social stability and nutritional security, putting development gains at risk. (Shortfall: \$19 million)



**Horn of Africa:** Countries in the Horn of Africa are suffering from the combined effects of high food and fuel prices, drought as well as conflict. Needs are growing and immediate funding is necessary. These operations will be featured in an upcoming bulletin.



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**Nepal:** A fragile peace agreement and continued reliance on neighbouring countries for a wide range of essential commodities provide the backdrop to WFP efforts to assist an additional 1.25 million rural poor. Over 40% of Nepalese are undernourished; almost 50 % of children are stunted; and acute malnutrition approaches 20% in some areas. WFP will partner with UNICEF to support targeted nutritional interventions and initiatives such as combined cash and food transfer programmes. Community-based food for work activities, including a partnership with FAO to support small scale irrigation systems, improve seed stocks and support cash crops, are also planned. (Shortfall: US\$20 million)

**Occupied Palestinian Territories:** WFP will assist an additional 120,000 people. Planned activities include vouchers for bread and cheese through local bakeries and shops, as well as expanded school feeding activities. On average, families in Gaza and the West Bank respectively spend 66 % and 56 % of their incomes on food. (Shortfall: US\$8 million)

**Pakistan:** Ten million additional Pakistanis are now considered vulnerable based on reduced caloric intake. WFP will complement Government cash transfer programmes by targeting the most vulnerable households in extremely food deficit districts, primarily in areas bordering Afghanistan. School feeding programmes implemented jointly with UNESCO will be scaled up to reach 2.7 million beneficiaries while a further 40,000 households are to be engaged in safety net activities focused on infrastructure rehabilitation and asset creation. An additional 71,000 children under five will be reached through a joint nutrition intervention with UNICEF and WHO. (Shortfall: US\$49 million)

**Senegal:** WFP will reach some 540,000 people through supplementary feeding, general food distributions, school

feeding and food-for-work. School-based feeding for children 6-24 months old will also be piloted. All activities are planned in the context of Government's Social Emergency Initiative, which also envisages the introduction of food vouchers for the most vulnerable households. (Shortfall: US\$22 million)

**Tajikistan:** Prices of bread and vegetable oil have more than doubled since August 2007, and those of most other basic foods have increased by over 50 percent. WFP is extending its assistance to include an additional one million people. Initiatives include food packages for families before and after the winter to help prevent a further erosion of household assets, and expanded support for children through schools and clinics. WFP is also exploring the possibility of introducing cash and voucher programmes, and new nutritious products. (Shortfall: US\$29 million)

**Uganda:** Since the beginning of 2008, prices of staple commodities have increased by about 50 percent due to greater demand in neighbouring countries, higher fuel prices and poor harvests. WFP, FAO and the Government plan to support some 160,000 subsistence farmers via the creation of a productive safety net that helps them obtain inputs, and build infrastructure. WFP targets subsistence farmers and their families, based on a new "Livelihoods and Price Vulnerability Index". These families are to receive food assistance, seeds and tools and to benefit from support to build roads and other market infrastructure. (Shortfall: US\$17 million)

**Yemen:** Through general food distributions, WFP will target 714,000 people in districts where more than two-thirds of the population cannot meet their basic food needs. It will also provide supplementary rations of nutritious foods, in concert with UNICEF, to 145,000 malnourished children and mothers. (Shortfall: US\$26 million)

