

World Food Programme

Weathering the Storm



Food Security Analysis

- When WFP draws up its emergency and development operations in any country, its first priority is to analyse the food security situation of the population: **who is hungry or vulnerable, how many are they, where do they live, why are they hungry, how is the situation evolving and what should be done to save their lives and livelihoods?**
- WFP's Food Security Analysis Service and its unique network of about 120 specialists posted around the world answer these fundamental questions in all the countries where WFP is active.
- **WFP's strength** is its flexibility to conduct rapid assessments as well as large household surveys which give an in-depth understanding of food security in a given country, to monitor evolving situations in countries with recurrent crises and to immediately assess needs when an emergency breaks.
- As new challenges such as climate change and high food prices emerge, adding to existing ones such as pandemics and conflicts, understanding the multi-faceted angles of food insecurity is crucial to shape WFP's responses.
- **Food security analysis** provides information to identify the appropriate type and scale of intervention, whether food distributions, school feeding, support to re-establish livelihoods or more innovative interventions such as cash/ voucher programmes. It also helps target those who need assistance most.
- In a rapidly changing global environment, WFP is constantly refining its methods to assess food security. For example, WFP increasingly needs to understand the situation in urban areas, where households are affected by higher prices.
- **High Food Prices** - and their impact on households in countries exposed to high commodity costs - are being determined by WFP. Several assessments are ongoing with partners to establish availability, price and whether people can afford to purchase commodities. The impact on households' food consumption and coping strategies is carefully examined.
- In recent years, WFP has developed expertise in analysing



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markets, how they function, as well as regional commodity flows.

- **Increasing natural disasters** - WFP is often present in a country when a disaster occurs. Thanks to its deep-field presence, it can quickly establish what the most urgent needs are. Under difficult circumstances, WFP specialists conduct initial assessments to gain a quick understanding of a situation especially when information is scant.
- Building its capacity to understand the longer-term impact of climate on households and livelihoods, WFP is partnering with academic and research institutions,

governments and UN agencies working in applied technology (remote sensing, GIS).

- More timely, accurate and efficient analysis is ensured through advanced technology including Geographical Information Systems (GIS), innovative satellite applications, or Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) to collect, manage and analyse data.
- **Close collaboration** exists between WFP and its partners worldwide; all activities are implemented jointly with governments, UN agencies such as FAO, UNICEF and WHO, FEWSNET, local and international NGOs, and universities.

WFP's intelligence gathering

WFP carries out the following types of analyses, almost always with partners:

- **Comprehensive Food Security & Vulnerability Analysis** provides pre-crisis detailed information - under normal conditions - on groups that are most vulnerable, their location and factors which could further aggravate their situation. Subsequent assessments can measure any changes against this "pre-crisis baseline".
- **Emergency Food Security Assessments** vary according to the nature of a crisis, ranging from a sudden disaster like the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, to a slow onset emergency such as a drought or economic crisis.
- **Food Security Monitoring Systems** monitor the evolution of a situation and potential threats and risks to current and future food security.
- **Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions** are conducted jointly with FAO.
- **Joint Assessment Missions** are carried out with UNHCR on refugees.
- **Inter-agency Assessment Missions**

Every year, WFP conducts about 90 assessments. Pre-crisis information is available in countries which are the most vulnerable and subject to recurrent crises.