

Zimbabwe: Scaling up the triple nexus in the wake of an unprecedented humanitarian response

Side event on the margins of the 2019 second regular session of the Executive Board

Thursday, 21 November 2019 from 13:30 to 14:30

Aula I, WFP headquarters

Background

Zimbabwe is experiencing the highest food insecurity levels in a decade, with over 5.5 million people expected to be food insecure during the peak lean season as per the latest Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC). In addition, initial results of the urban assessment indicate a further increase in the number of food insecure people by 2.2 million people. Based on these findings, the United Nations launched its revised flash appeal in August 2019 at a total cost of USD 350 million with the food sector component covering USD 230 million.

This underscores the impact of multiple risk factors, including climate shocks and the current economic crisis. The economic situation is likely to further deteriorate in the next 12 months as the recently introduced local currency continues to depreciate rapidly against the US dollar. While the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Staff-Monitored Program (SMP) addresses the core challenges from an economic perspective, it comes without the necessary social assistance programmes and finance needed to help cushion the impacts on the most vulnerable of the austerity measures.

The economic instability has already and will continue to significantly increase food needs, disrupt markets, limit the government's response capacity and pose challenges to WFP operations. WFP and partners are in the process of revising the food insecurity levels against the depreciation of the currency and the government capacity to respond, which is likely to increase the caseload WFP will cover, currently set at 2.7 million people during the peak of the lean season from January to April 2020.

Following a visit of the WFP Executive Director, Mr David Beasley, in August 2019, the WFP country office has taken up the challenge to significantly scale up the use of its rapidly expanding humanitarian response as a platform to provide resilience building and livelihood support, augmenting value for money of its investments and bringing the humanitarian, development and peace nexus to the centre of its operations.

Objectives

- Alert Member States of the exponentially increasing and complex socio-economic, political and food and nutrition security challenges and their detrimental impact on the overall humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe.
- Impress on Member States the urgency, scale and need for immediate additional support to WFP/Zimbabwe and their potential engagement with the international financial institutions in the wake of the detrimental impact of the IMF SMP, as described further above.
- Demonstrate how WFP invests in the humanitarian, development and peace nexus at scale with a view to augmenting the value for money of all its investments.

Agenda

The discussion will be opened by Mr David Beasley, the WFP Executive Director. He will be joined by a panel of speakers:

- Mr Lovemore Matuke, Deputy Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in Zimbabwe, will initiate the panel discussion by providing an overview of the ongoing humanitarian interventions undertaken by the Government including the challenges and opportunities.
- Ms Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, will provide a broad overview of the situation and WFP's corporate triple nexus strategy.
- Ms Margaret Malu, WFP Regional Director a.i. Southern Africa, will discuss regional challenges around climate change and food security affecting Zimbabwe.
- Mr Eddie Rowe, WFP Country Director for Zimbabwe, will elaborate on the situation in the country, the challenges and WFP's response plan including the investments made through the nexus agenda.

A question and answer session will follow the presentations.