



World Food Programme  
Programme Alimentaire Mondial  
Programa Mundial de Alimentos  
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

The Assistant Executive Director  
Programme and Policy Development

10 April 2020

Dear Partners,

Our partnership is more important than ever given these unprecedented times. Following our videoconference of March 27th, I am writing to update you on WFP's response and our guidance to WFP Country Offices (COs) for our work together.

Inevitably, the COVID-19 outbreak brings unforeseen challenges and difficulties, and no one is more vulnerable to these threats than the hungry, most vulnerable people who are at the heart of our work together. The scale and complexity remain extraordinary for the UN, WFP, and all of our partners, and will continue to grow. We have thus recently activated a WFP Global L3 Corporate Emergency Response to ensure adequate global response capacities and standards have been mobilized and implemented to continue to sustain our operational levels.

WFP's first priority now is to sustain and adjust its programmes to meet essential food and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable and provide stability to communities while expanding our infrastructure, assets, capacities and operational partnerships, to enable the wider, global humanitarian and health response, as articulated in the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

WFP is continuing with real-time monitoring and tracking of COVID-19 impacts, globally, regionally and locally, to inform re-prioritization and revisions to programmes, most of which we implement together. We will continue to provide lifesaving food assistance to the most vulnerable as we put in place measures to minimize transmission risk for WFP staff, partners and beneficiaries. This includes extraordinary efforts to ensure WFP's workforce and our partners are able to operate.

Together with you, our cooperating partners, WFP is expediting the delivery and prepositioning of food, advancing food distributions, increasing the number of food distribution points, and deploying, where possible, rapid response teams to hard-to-reach areas to ensure that emergency food and nutrition assistance is provided in time and safely to the most vulnerable people. This includes special COVID-19 preparedness measures, for example, in South Sudan where double distributions are ongoing for 1.2 million beneficiaries and planned for an additional 2 million people throughout April. Looking ahead, and as part of our work as a UN system, we are also offering support and services to Governments to



ensure basic social services and expand social protection systems in order to address socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on additional people and communities.

To work with you, our partners, during these challenging times we have asked our COs to above all use flexibility and simplification to ensure business continuity. This includes increased flexibility in existing agreements to reprogramme and shift resources into the most affected locations and most urgent activities, and fast-tracked procedures for negotiating and revising agreements. We are also encouraging simplified oversight and monitoring procedures such as desk reviews, remote monitoring and electronic document exchanges instead of onsite spot checking, for instance, to avoid the risk of transmission. The same applies to digital signatures for which specific guidance has been issued to our CO staff, whereby digital signatures are encouraged, where needed, while recommending that approving authorities continue to print, physically sign and scan all agreements on the understanding that the original signed copy will be exchanged in due course.

The safety of WFP and partner staff and beneficiaries remains central in all activities, in line with WHO recommendations and a rational and appropriate use of PPEs. WFP is working hard to verify the possibility of securing PPEs through procurement coordination and, as decided between country offices and partners, costs for these will be reflected in FLA revisions and borne by WFP or cost shared as necessary.

In addition, we are asking our COs and CPs to:

- Have business continuity plans to ensure continuity of life-saving activities;
- Pre-position foods and related essential needs closer to distribution sites, if feasible and if secure storage is available, to alleviate the impact of potential supply chain disruptions in the short-term;
- Ensure that robust beneficiary communication arrangements and complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) are in place and accessible to all as these are essential tools for community engagement and protection. It is critical that beneficiaries have needed information and understand changes to their assistance in combination with the CFMs. Information campaigns need to be coordinated with other response actors to ensure consistent messaging and to avoid inflating the “infodemic”;



- Sensitize the affected populations we serve and communities about good practices to avoid transmission. Raising awareness and ensuring national and global health prevention guidelines are displayed at all distribution sites is a priority for us all;
- Ensure mitigation measures are designed in consultation with the affected communities wherever feasible, national health authorities and respective sectors/cluster, including the protection cluster;
- Ensure coordination mechanisms are in place at field and country-level that allow regular dialogue and quick adaptation and adjustments to our planning and agreements, as needed and to ensure national government and other stakeholders' needs are taken into account.

Please continue to consult with the HQ NGO unit as needed and your field teams should closely liaise with their contacts in WFP Country Offices. We will convene another video conference soon and I look forward to seeing you all online to continue our discussion and important work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Val N. Guarnieri'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'V' and a stylized 'G'.

Valerie N. Guarnieri