

Reporting period: 01 January– 31 March 2015

Country Director: [David Bulman]

COUNTRY STRATEGY:

WFP RoC currently operates through a Country Programme (CP 200648) which aims to: i) promote access to education by ensuring primary school children have a balanced diet based on local produce; ii) support the Government in setting up a social safety net for vulnerable households; iii) provide nutrition support to malnourished people living with HIV or tuberculosis who are under treatment, pregnant and nursing women, as well as children aged 6–23 months to prevent stunting; and iv) provide technical support to the Government to strengthen disaster and risk management.

WFP RoC is also assisting a decreasing number of DRC refugees under the PRRO 200147 and 17,000 CAR refugees under the regional EMOP 200799 in the Likouala department.



OPERATIONS:

	Project Duration	Planned number of people	Total requirements (in USD)	Total received (in USD)	Total Funded (%)	6 months Funding Requirements (in USD)*	Top Donors
CP 200648	Jan 15 - Dec 18	288,134	56,829,487	609,568	1%	4,150,214	Republic of Congo
PRRO 200147	Jan –July 15	17,000	53,491,004	23,731,372	44%	1,421,354	Japan, UN CERF, Brazil, Canada, Republic of Congo
EMOP 200799	Jan-Dec 15	17,000	4,066,822	206,865	5%	1,113,962	Japan, USA, Republic of Congo, UN Common Funds and Agencies

*April-September

Summary of WFP assistance:

Despite the fact that the Republic of Congo is classified as a middle-income country, about 48 percent of its population lives below USD 1.25 a day. Moreover, only two percent of arable land is currently cultivated, producing less than 30 percent of the population's food needs. To address these challenges, WFP is implementing a **Country Programme 200648** (2015-2018) that has four components: i) school feeding, ii) social safety nets, iii) nutrition, and iv) disaster risk reduction. Under the **School Feeding component (C1)**, WFP provides 95,000 primary school children with daily warm meals in an effort to increase school attendance, improve children's learning capacity and nutritional status, as well as enrolment, retention, and completion rates in the most food-insecure regions of RoC. During the reporting period, WFP also began assisting some 3,500 indigenous children through the non-public ORA (Observe, React, Act) schools in the Likouala department. Under the **Safety Net component (C2)**, WFP is supporting the Government in managing national Safety Net programmes in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, and recently in two rural cities. The programme provides electronic vouchers and food to vulnerable households who live below the poverty line with pregnant and nursing women, children who have dropped out of school, as well as HIV and TB patients. The voucher transfers are conditioned on children's enrolment in school and pregnant/nursing women scheduling visits to their local health centres. The **Nutrition component (C3)** provides additional assistance to people living with HIV and/or TB under the safety net programme. To supplement the e-voucher, WFP also supports these patients with Specialized Nutritious Foods composed of Super Cereal and vitamin A & D fortified oil to help treat moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and increase their adhere to medical treatments (ARV and TB-DOT). WFP RoC is currently designing its **risks and disasters management component (C4)**, which will be implemented soon.

Under **PRRO 200147**, WFP RoC continues to provide food assistance to a decreasing number of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo in the Likouala department. The food assistance saves lives among the most vulnerable (especially children and women) by ensuring basic food needs of refugees until their return to their home countries. This assistance also reduces pressure on the host population for food supplies, housing, health, and sanitation. Through a programme revision, the project has been extended to July 2015 and is being considered for further extension through the end of 2015.

In January 2015, WFP RoC started providing food assistance to an increasing number of refugees from the Central African Republic hosted in the Likouala department under a regional operation, **EMOP 200799**.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

ACHIEVEMENTS	ISSUES/CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP School feeding component (C1): WFP is supporting the Government in developing its national school feeding policy. To this end, WFP has been meeting regularly with Government and stakeholders to discuss the policy, and attended a two-day national consultation from the 12-13 February to discuss the policy's framework. In early January, WFP and the Association "Pères spiritains du Congo" (ASPC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding detailing WFP's food assistance to the non-public "Observe, Act, React" (ORA) schools for indigenous children in the districts of Betou and Impfondo. Since January, more than 16 mt of food has been distributed to around 1,951 ORA school children in Likouala department. • EMOP 200799: Following recent outbreaks of armed conflict in the Central African Republic, Betou has been receiving an influx of new refugees since January. While WFP experienced a shortfall of cereals for CAR refugees in February, WFP RoC was able to fully carry out distributions in January and March to meet these increasing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiaries under the safety net component have not received e-vouchers since January due to lack of resources. As a result, the already-fragile nutritional status and health of HIV/TB patients is likely to further deteriorate. A break in e-voucher transfers and will also likely cause a decline in patients' adherence to their medical treatments. • Activities aimed to prevent chronic malnutrition among pregnant and nursing women and children under two have not started yet due to a lack of Nutributter and micronutrient powders (MNPs).

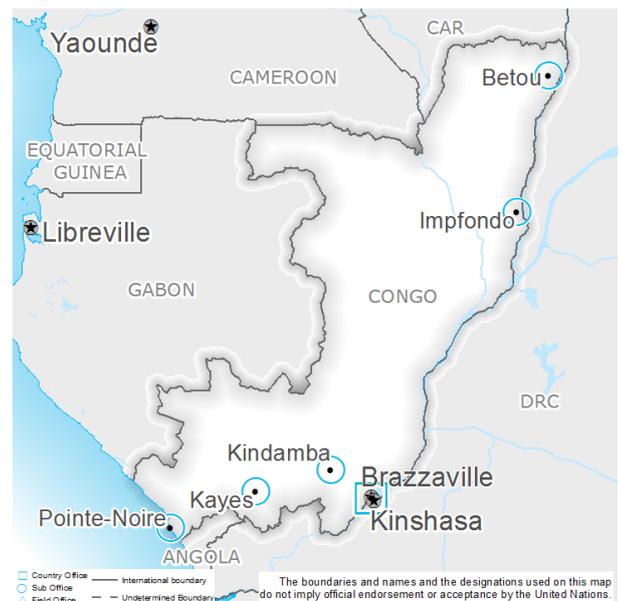
PARTNERSHIPS

- **UNHCR**, which maintains a database of its beneficiaries and provides updated lists for distribution.
- **AARREC** for food distribution to refugees;
- **Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and Solidarity** for activities coordination, targeting and the management of the project in the field;
- **MTN** and **Airtel** for monthly electronic voucher transfers. Agreements (Ministry/MTN and/or Airtel/retailers) were signed with **retailers** operating in the selected project communities to provide food items to households in exchange for electronic vouchers which are redeemed at WFP's partner MTN sales outlets;
- **World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF** in launching the System Approach to Better Education Results (SABER) process and in the Safety Net project;
- **The National Nutrition Service** (Ministry of Health);
- **Ministry of Education** in the school feeding program designing and implementation;
- **Ministry of Industrial Development & Private Sector** Promotion of the cassava flour fortification and palm oil enrichment pilot;
- **FAO** in support of market access activities for smallholder farmers;
- **APSC (Association des pères spiritains au Congo)** for the non public ORA schools
- WFP also partners with various **NGOs** to distribute Specialized Nutritious Foods for its safety nets. Some of these NGOs include, Association des Femmes solidaires in Brazzaville, Les Merveilles de Dieu in Pointe-Noire, Association Provi-Santé d'Owando, AZUR développement in Sibiti, and Terre Sans Frontière in Bétou.

COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Republic of Congo has a population of 4.2 million people, of which almost 64 percent live in the urban areas of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. Congo is a lower middle-income country, politically stable, with a GDP amounting to USD 14 billion in 2014. The 2014 UNDP Human Development Index ranked the Republic of Congo 140th out of 187 countries, placing it in the "low" category for human development. Congo is rich in natural resources (oil, timber) and fertile land. Oil exports contribute to approximately 70 percent of government revenues and about 95 percent of export earnings.

Meanwhile, food production is below national requirements, with only 2 percent of arable land currently under cultivation, producing less than 30 percent of the populations' food needs. The country imports most (75 percent) of its food, leading to high food prices. Income is unevenly distributed, reflected by a Gini coefficient of 0.43. According to the latest Comprehensive Food Security & Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA 2013), at least 72,000 households, or 8.5 percent of the population, suffer from food insecurity, which is related to poor economic diversification, low agricultural productivity, and household poverty. Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire alone have the largest number of food insecure people.



The mortality rate of children under the age of five stands at 96 deaths per 1,000 live births, ranking the 19th highest in the world (ICGME 2013). The 2011 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) found rates of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) at 1.5 percent, global acute malnutrition (GAM) at 5.9 percent, stunting at 24.2 percent and underweight at 11.6 percent. The national HIV/AIDS prevalence is 3.2 percent, with urban areas having a higher prevalence than rural areas (3.3 percent against 2.8 percent). The Republic of Congo also hosts some 120,000 refugees and asylum seekers mainly originating from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), Angola, Burundi and Chad.