

KABUL, 29 December 2010 - The UN World Food Programme (WFP) plans to assist 7.3 million people in Afghanistan in 2011 but only has enough funding to feed the most vulnerable for a few months, and needs US\$400 million to continue its humanitarian activities next year.

WFP appealed to donors for urgent funding through a [Consolidated Appeals Process \(CAP\) launched on 5 December](#) with the aim of making up a food shortfall of 103,600 tons (costing about \$157 million) until June.

The UN Secretary-General warned in a [December report](#) that the funding shortfall could affect all WFP projects, including school feeding and food-for-work.

“If additional support cannot be obtained, WFP will have to cut planned food distribution activities throughout Afghanistan,” said the report.

Thus far no WFP project has been suspended and the organization said it was utilizing resources so as to avoid cutting food assistance to the most vulnerable.

“We have prioritized our activities to maintain lifesaving food assistance, including support for mothers and children, and for people affected by conflict or natural disaster,” Challiss McDonough, a WFP spokeswoman in Kabul, told IRIN.

Recent funding from the USA and Canada eased wheat shortages faced by WFP following the catastrophic floods in Pakistan in July. But the US-funded Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS-NET) has predicted that over half of the country would be highly or moderately food-insecure in January-February. It said wheat prices had [increased by over 31 percent since July 2010](#) and further increases were likely in the coming months.

Afghanistan remains among the most food-insecure countries in the world where armed conflict and natural disasters have denied access to adequate food to over eight million people, aid agencies say. They also think the humanitarian situation is [likely to deteriorate in 2011](#).

Fighting, displacement and food

Afghan and foreign forces have been using military helicopters to deliver aid supplies to at least three provinces, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force said.

Hundreds of families have reportedly been displaced in the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand where US-led forces have been locked in battle with the Taliban.

Aid officials in both provinces said they urgently needed food for distribution to conflict-affected

internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups.

“We have requested food aid for 2,500 families but have not heard from WFP and other aid organizations yet,” Ghulam Farouq Noorzai, director of the refugees and returnees department in Helmand, told IRIN, adding that 900 of the families had been displaced from Marjah and Nad Ali districts in Helmand Province.

Meanwhile, winter is also having an impact: In the northeastern province of Badakhshan, officials said roads to 10 districts had been blocked by snow and there were concerns about food shortages.

“Food prices have hiked significantly and we are extremely concerned about the situation of inaccessible vulnerable families,” said Sayed Nasir Hemat, head of the Afghan Red Crescent Society in Badakhshan, adding that his organization did not have adequate resources to respond.