

# From Hunger To Hope



The work of the  
World Food Programme (WFP) in  
Latin America  
and the Caribbean



**World Food  
Programme**

# “Where there is hunger, there is no hope”

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

President of Brasil



## The Persistent Problem

In Latin America and the Caribbean, hunger still affects almost 53 million people, of whom around 9 million (16%) are children less than five years of age marginalized by chronic undernutrition. The situation worsens among indigenous groups and afro-descendent populations and constitutes one of the greatest threats to development in the region by preventing affected children from reaching their full.

But, how often do you read about these children in newspapers or see their stories on television? The majority of people afflicted by hunger go unnoticed. Those who do not have a way to feed themselves suffer in silence. Only in times of enormous natural disasters like earthquakes, floods or hurricanes do we see the harsh reality of what it means to live on the edge of survival. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) offers people affected by hunger and poverty hope for life and solutions for building a better future.

## The First Line in the Fight against Hunger

In areas that are remote, isolated or prone to the negative effects of climate change, WFP works with government support to bring food to people who suffer from hunger, providing assistance to those affected by floods, droughts, earthquakes or human conflicts. With a presence in the poorest and least developed countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, we help families rebuild their livelihoods and give schoolchildren the stimulus to learn and develop their potential. We also work through clinics and health centers to reach pregnant and breastfeeding mothers with nutritional supplements for themselves and their children. WFP additionally targets nutrition support to people living with HIV where needed to help them improve their health and obtain the best possible results from antiretroviral treatment.

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Through all these avenues, WFP reached nine million people in the region in 2008.

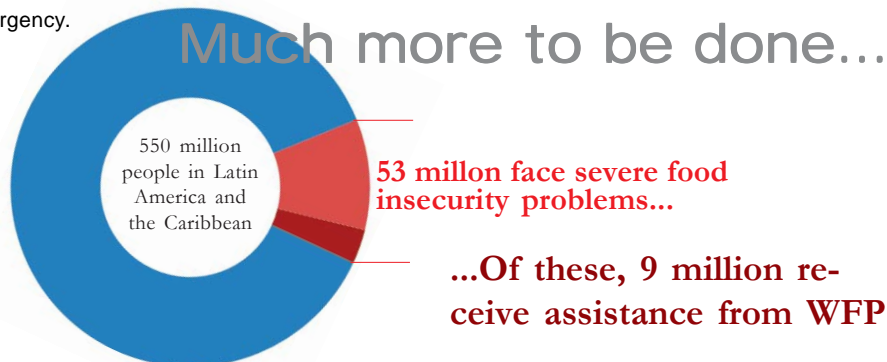
## Not Only Food

In Latin America and the Caribbean, WFP helps governments to strengthen capacities to optimize the effectiveness of programs to fight hunger and undernutrition. WFP promotes South-South and triangular cooperation through networks like [www.nutrinet.org](http://www.nutrinet.org), promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience among actors from different countries. Additionally, the humanitarian response community relies on WFP in times of catastrophe to provide trucks, planes, boats, and helicopters to move personnel and supplies to where they are most needed. If no trucks or boats are available to transport aid items, pack animals, canoes or any method necessary will be used; our priority is to reach those who need help the most. WFP also provides emergency communications systems so that humanitarian workers can coordinate their response in times of crisis.

## Collaboration to End Hunger

WFP works together with governments, our United Nations sister agencies, the Red Cross and around 3,000 other non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Our NGO partners include large international organizations and National Civil Defense as well as small organizations working at the community level. Thanks to our logistics capacity and our presence in the most remote places on earth, we are positioned to assist other humanitarian aid organizations, creating a collaboration that is essential for emergency operations to be conducted without setbacks. To this end, WFP manages three emergency response hubs for the region - located in Panama, Ecuador, and El Salvador - that have reduced the response time to less than 72 hours after an emergency.

## Much more to be done...



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## New Challenges

The world is changing, and so are we. When WFP was founded more than four decades ago, we fought hunger by moving food from places with an abundance to areas in need. The current challenges demand new, more innovative responses. Food reserves have been considerably reduced and the prices of food and fuel have increased, pushing six million people in the region into hunger. The global economic crisis and its effects are also being felt, with a significant reduction in remittances from emigrants to their families who are dependent on these funds to meet their basic needs. For these reasons, we constantly adapt interventions and tools to meet the emerging needs of people affected by hunger.

## Purchases from Small Producers

Local or regional purchases can stimulate markets, increasing the income of agricultural producers and encouraging them to produce more. If the costs of transport and food storage are contained, the money spent has a greater impact and meets more needs. For this reason, WFP is developing a series of pilot projects in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua called Purchase for Progress- with the goal of utilizing our purchasing power to acquire goods from small agricultural producers and ensure they have a profitable market for their surplus products. At the same time, the projects cover the nutritional needs of vulnerable groups and support local food processing, thereby increasing the availability of nutritious products in markets. For example, in Guatemala WFP supports the processing and enrichment of locally purchased corn and other basic ingredients to produce a micronutrient-fortified flour called Vitacereal™, which benefits the most undernourished women and children in the country.

## Food for Life

In our programs, we promote good nutrition as the basis that sustains life. It has a progressive effect on the health of a community and is essential for the physical and intellectual development of children. Good nutrition also constitutes an important part of the package of assistance that should be offered to people living with HIV or tuberculosis, as it helps fortify the body in the fight against infectious diseases and improves the efficiency of prescribed medication.

## Mitigating Climate Change

Although climate change affects us all, it places an especially heavy burden on the poor, who are the most affected by drought, floods, or bad harvests. WFP, together with governments, helps people adapt to the effects of climate variations. For several decades, we have helped communities safeguard their food security through food-for-work programs that support construction of flood control projects, rehabilitation of irrigation systems, and planting of trees to stop desertification. WFP has a long tradition of providing protection for the poorest populations and helping them find more sustainable livelihoods.

## Financing Exclusively from Voluntary Contributions

Every penny counts, since we depend entirely on voluntary contributions. The largest source of our funding comes from governments, but private businesses and individuals provide increasing support for WFP's mission to end hunger. Governments, businesses, organizations and individuals donate because they trust we will use their money wisely. More than 90% of donations to WFP are used to provide food to poor people suffering from hunger or to cover associated costs.

## Space for Hope

In spite of adverse conditions, today Latin America and the Caribbean have the basic infrastructure, political will, and social capital to initiate a massive offensive against hunger, childhood undernutrition, and extreme poverty. This can and should be done.

# Presence in Latin America and the Caribbean



The World Food Programme is the humanitarian agency with the largest presence, greatest coverage, and broadest implementation of activities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## WFP's 5 Strategic Objectives

1. Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies
2. Prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures
3. Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster or transition situations
4. Reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition
5. Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger



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