

UN emergency food agency to feed some 220,000 people in conflict-affected Ukraine

15 February 2017 – Access to food is becoming harder in eastern Ukraine as prices are outpacing incomes, the United Nations emergency food agency today said, warning that without longer-term intervention, more people will need humanitarian aid in the months and years to come.

Food prices are increasing at a time when household incomes are impacted by unemployment, and we see many families resorting to negative coping strategies in the face of economic hardship," said the World Food Programme (WFP) in Ukraine, Dorte Ellehammer.

The UN agency said there are about 70,000 people in eastern Ukraine considered "most vulnerable." This group includes the elderly, families headed by a single mother, people with chronic illnesses or disabilities, and people who do not receive other humanitarian aid.

In addition, there are up to 150,000 people considered "moderately food-insecure," meaning that they struggle to find or buy enough food on a daily basis, according to WFP.

"As the conflict has continued, many Ukrainians have become more vulnerable due to the lack of sufficient social benefits to cover food and other living expenses," the agency said in a press release.

To help Ukrainians cope, WFP said that it would scale up its use of cash-based transfers in areas where the banks are functioning properly and there is food in the stores.

During the coming spring and summer, the agency said that it plans to implement small-scale early recovery projects to increase incomes, diversify crops and help to inject some money into local businesses.

WFP has urgently requested more than \$30 million to provide much-needed food aid to eastern Ukraine through the end of 2017.