

With millions in Yemen on brink of famine, situation 'close to a breaking point,' warns UN agency

12 April 2017 – The United Nations World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) is scaling up its emergency operations in war-torn Yemen to provide urgently needed food assistance to some nine million people, the agency said today.

“We are in a [race against time](#) to save lives and prevent a full-scale famine unfolding in the country, but we urgently need resources to do this,” said the WFP Representative and Country Director in Yemen, Stephen Anderson.

The new emergency operation will require up to \$1.2 billion over a one-year period and should allow WFP to gradually scale up assistance to feed all severely food insecure people in Yemen every month. The success of this operation hinges on immediate sufficient resources from donors.

“The situation is getting close to a breaking point in Yemen with unprecedented levels of hunger and food insecurity. Millions of people can no longer survive without urgent food assistance,” said Mr. Anderson continued.

With the new plan, WFP aims to provide vital food assistance to nearly seven million people classified as severely food insecure, in addition to nutrition support to prevent or treat malnutrition among 2.2 million children. WFP will also assist breastfeeding and pregnant mothers with specialized nutritious foods.

Until it can secure the funds that it needs, WFP will prioritize 6.7 million people for urgent food assistance. Some 2.5 million of them – particularly those in governorates hardest-hit by food insecurity – will receive a package of assistance aimed at averting famine.

This will include a full food ration, which will cover 100 per cent of the food needs of every member of a family for a month, in addition to nutrition support for malnourished children and women. This is the first time that WFP has been able to provide a full food basket in more than a year.

A second priority group of 4.2 million people will receive a reduced food ration, which comprises 60 per cent of the full food basket.

“We have to secure urgent resources to meet the needs of all nine million people who are severely food insecure in Yemen as well as the millions of malnourished children and women,” added Mr. Anderson. “Until we are able to do this, we have to spread out what we have to ensure that we are helping the people who are at the most immediate risk of starvation.”

WFP prioritizes its assistance in consultation with humanitarian partners targeting people in highest priority governorates and districts, which are already showing signs of famine-like conditions – especially in Taiz,

Hodeidah, Lahj, Abyan and Sa'ada.