The situation in Colombia continues to be characterized by armed group activity as well as natural disasters, leading to increased humanitarian needs. In addition, Colombia still hosts the largest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, whose already dire living conditions have further been aggravated by the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and related urgent and essential restrictive measures.

Objectives

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is working with partners in the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster to:

- Restore and safeguard the agricultural-based livelihoods of vulnerable communities, focusing on resilience, ethnicity and gender.
- Ensure joint, integrated actions to improve vulnerable populations’ food security and nutrition.
- Increase communities’ access to food and dietary diversity.
- Strengthen agriculture-based livelihoods and access to employment for refugees, migrants, returnees and host communities, while promoting socio-economic inclusion and resilience, taking into account gender and ethnicity, and environmental protection.
**Situation analysis**

- **6.2 million** people in need of food security assistance
- **+1.7 million** Venezuelan refugees and migrants
- **69%** of Venezuelan migrant households decreased the number of meals per day
- **28** of Colombia’s 32 departments impacted by heavy rains during the 2020 hurricane season (October–December) and **79 000** households affected
- **85%** of national cereal supply covered by imports

**Activities**

- **Improve food production for the most vulnerable households**
  - recover productive assets
  - vaccination campaigns
  - agricultural inputs
  - trainings
  - food and nutrition education
  - strengthen institutional capacities in the rapid recovery of food production
  - biosafety and biosecurity campaigns to prevent actors in the food chain from being agents of transmission of COVID-19 in rural areas
  - income-generating activities
  - accountability to affected populations
Impact on food security

Despite the 2016 Peace Agreement signed by the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army, which ended decades of civil war and contributed to better economic and social conditions, Colombia continues to face significant humanitarian challenges.

Violence in remote rural and urban areas of the country persists, linked to the restructuring of armed groups that took advantage of the situation during the pandemic to expand their territorial presence. Clashes between the various groups are affecting the population, forcing families to abandon their homes and livelihood activities (e.g. farming, fishing), decreasing their access to food and income. This has exacerbated vulnerabilities, especially of indigenous communities. Armed and criminal groups are likely to intensify fighting over territorial control, drug trafficking routes and resources, hindering peace efforts and those made to address the pandemic.

The impact of COVID-19 is not only health related, but also affects food systems and agriculture-based livelihoods, with increased costs of agricultural inputs and of transportation. This results in reduced production activities and the increased risk of food insecurity and malnutrition among the most vulnerable populations.

Providing both vulnerable host communities, and refugee and migrant populations, especially in rural areas, with agricultural support is crucial to allow them to quickly cover their food needs and increase their self-reliance.
Natural disasters such as droughts and floods still have a significant impact on populations, particularly in Arauca, Chocó, La Guajira, Nariño and Putumayo. Between the last quarter of 2020 and May 2021, there is a high probability of excessive rainfall throughout most of the country linked to La Niña phenomenon, accompanied by flash floods and landslides, which may damage harvests and productive assets, disrupting the livelihoods of vulnerable households and limiting their access to food.

The living conditions of refugees and migrants from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and their host communities, and of the rural populations affected by armed violence and natural disasters, have deteriorated following the adoption of the urgent and essential measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which makes overcoming existing vulnerabilities even more challenging. The loss of income from formal and informal jobs has decreased their ability to access basic goods and services, such as food, health and education.

While many Venezuelan refugees and migrants returned to their home country due to the socio-economic difficulties in Colombia, there have recently been re-entries of Venezuelans to Colombia, which are expected to continue to increase, generating additional humanitarian needs. The majority of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population in need of food assistance in 2021 will continue to be in Colombia. This adds to existing vulnerabilities, especially in rural and remote areas where the levels of food insecurity and malnutrition are already of concern. Providing agricultural support to households is crucial for them to produce their own food and foster self-reliance.