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Management response to the recommendations deriving from the evaluation of the Somalia country portfolio (2012–2017)

Background

1. This document presents management's response to the recommendations deriving from the evaluation of the WFP Somalia country portfolio, which covered the period from 2012 to 2017.
2. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning, the quality of and factors influencing WFP's decision making, and the performance and results of portfolio activities. It was timed to provide evidence for informing the design of WFP's new interim country strategic plan (ICSP) for Somalia.
3. Management notes that the evaluation found WFP to have positioned itself well and strategically in order to respond in its areas of comparative advantage – emergency response, common services and preparedness activities – and in nutrition. WFP had played a key role in helping to avert famine in 2017. Leadership in WFP's country office was found to have made strategic decisions that were appropriate to the national context, food security situation, WFP's mandate, national policy frameworks, the conditions that donors impose on their contributions, and changing government structures. The evaluation noted that WFP's portfolio was generally relevant to beneficiaries' needs and consistent with national policies at the federal and state levels, and that it had contributed to building capacity in food security analysis among national institutions.
4. Management appreciates the findings and largely agrees with the eight recommendations for WFP, which have informed and to a great extent been incorporated into the country office's ICSP for 2019–2021. Implementation of the recommendations will involve working closely with government counterparts and core stakeholders while taking into consideration the availability of resources.

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5. The following matrix sets out management's response to each of the recommendations, along with the planned actions and timelines for implementing them.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS DERIVING FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE SOMALIA COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION FOR THE PERIOD 2012-2017			
Recommendation	Action by	Management response and actions planned or taken	Implementation timeline
<p>Recommendation 1: National safety net programme</p> <p>WFP should provide technical leadership in developing and piloting a national safety net programme – Somali Safety Net Programme – for addressing chronic, seasonal and acute needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Partner with both humanitarian and development donors. b) Consult closely with federal and state authorities on the design of the programme from the outset. 	<p>Country office, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management recognizes the opportunity that WFP has to provide technical leadership in the areas of its expertise during the ongoing collaboration among the Government, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, donors, international institutions and other stakeholders on developing a national social protection policy and subsequently a safety net programme in Somalia.</p> <p>a) and b) In partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP is providing the Government with technical support in the development of a national social protection policy and framework that includes the framework for a national safety net programme. During preparation of the policy, all stakeholders – including Somalia's federal and state governments, Member States in the region, humanitarian- and development-focused donors, non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and consortia – are being consulted. The social protection policy and framework must be in place prior to development of a national safety net programme.</p> <p>WFP will also be a major participant in discussions with the Government, donors and other humanitarian and development stakeholders on the piloting of a national social safety net, setting standards, testing methodologies and evaluating progress with a view to establishing the most effective social safety net system possible. Experience with WFP's shock-responsive urban social safety net, which will be expanded under the ICSP, is contributing to the preparatory learning and work at the national level in this process. During discussions on the ICSP, several humanitarian-focused donors expressed interest in supporting the urban safety net programme, and WFP is endeavouring to engage development-focused donors as a way of fostering interest and partnerships. Following an initial phase of implementing an urban social safety net in 2018, WFP will reflect on the lessons learned in consultation with the Government and will engage with donors during the further design and expansion of the programme under the ICSP.</p>	December 2020

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c) Draw on experiences from other safety net programmes in the region in order to inform the design.		c) Before the start of consultations on the social protection policy, the country office carried out a thorough desk review, which examined the composition of similar policies in the region and globally. During the design and implementation of the policy the country office will continue to work with the regional bureau in Nairobi in order to draw on relevant regional and global experiences with safety net programmes.	December 2019
d) Establish a single registry for beneficiaries, based on the interoperability of established systems.		d) As part of ongoing initiatives in the development of voter registration and digital identification, led by the Government and supported by United Nations agencies and the World Bank, WFP will use its expertise to support work aimed at establishing a single national registry, collaborating with major stakeholders in order to ensure that the registry is developed and used effectively. WFP will also engage in discussions and promote efforts to enable interoperability among established systems (with due consideration of data protection issues), drawing on its experience in scaling up its corporate digital beneficiary and transfer management system, SCOPE, with partners.	December 2020
e) Ensure that mobile cash is used as a delivery modality.		e) WFP's protocols for cash-based transfers in Somalia require that recipients' identity documents be verified in order to guarantee that the intended beneficiaries receive the transfers on redemption. In October 2017, the Government passed a telecommunications act requiring telecommunication companies to register all SIM cardholders by verifying their identification documents. Although the verification process has commenced, it has not yet reached the national level. WFP will continue to use the most appropriate transfer delivery options and will investigate the possibility of using mobile cash, with due consideration of risks and dependent on the progress made in strengthening the regulatory environment for mobile telecommunications in Somalia.	December 2021

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f) Ensure that referral pathways for protection cases are included.		f) As well as strengthening its own capacities for addressing protection issues, WFP will endeavour to support its cooperating partners in strengthening their capacities to identify and address vulnerabilities with a view to fostering the establishment of pathways for referring protection cases to safety net programmes.	December 2020
Recommendation 2: Strategy for assisting internally displaced persons WFP should develop a longer-term approach to assisting internally displaced persons: a) Include internally displaced persons as a target group in the national safety net programme. b) Tighten the definition and targeting of internally displaced persons in emergency assistance programmes.	Country office, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management is committed to establishing a longer-term approach to the provision of support to internally displaced persons as a key objective for recovery and a high priority for lasting stability in Somalia.</p> <p>a) Although there is not yet a national safety net programme, as outlined in the response to recommendation 1, WFP's shock-responsive urban social safety net, which is implemented under the ICSP in collaboration with the Government and strategic partners, targets the most vulnerable people in urban areas who have limited or no livelihood opportunities, particularly people in situations of protracted displacement. Given the high rates of food insecurity among internally displaced persons in urban areas, these people are foreseen as one of the main target groups. A long-term approach is followed in which, when feasible, employment opportunities will be fostered through skills training based on assessed market needs.</p> <p>b) WFP will continue to work with agencies and networks in the humanitarian country team that specialize in addressing the needs of displaced persons and protection issues in order to harmonize definitions and approaches to the targeting of internally displaced populations, including by using the community-based targeting guidelines for Somalia developed by the food security cluster.</p>	December 2020 December 2019

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c) Expand urban livelihood programmes based on evidence of effectiveness.		c) WFP will explore possible scenarios for the expansion of urban livelihood programmes for internally displaced persons under the ICSP. The expansion will be based on market assessments, collaboration with other stakeholders, including private sector entities working in urban areas, leverage of opportunities and learning from ongoing urban livelihood programmes in the region.	December 2019
d) Explore new partnerships for promoting the integration of internally displaced persons in urban communities.		d) WFP is part of the Durable Solutions Initiative, which brings together United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations working on programmes and issues related to displacement on a system-wide level and which aims to develop strategies in line with government policies for addressing displacement, ultimately working towards longer-term, sustainable solutions. WFP's involvement in the initiative will foster contributions to core discussions on the integration of internally displaced persons into urban communities and will encourage partnerships in the development of lasting solutions for internally displaced persons.	December 2019
Recommendation 3: Livelihoods WFP should shift the primary objective of FFA and FFT activities to creating productive assets and livelihoods: a) Plan and implement FFA and FFT activities within a three-year planning cycle and strengthen coherence with national strategies and programmes. b) Ring-fence resources in order to ensure continuity.	Country office, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters	Agreed. Management recognizes the importance of strengthening its food assistance for assets (FFA) and food assistance for training (FFT) activities in order to effectively build the resilience of targeted populations enabling them to withstand shocks and generating demonstrable benefits over time. a) WFP's FFA activities will be planned and implemented over a three-year planning cycle, ensuring alignment with national and regional strategies. This longer-term approach to programming will help to build resilience to shocks in targeted communities. b) In order to generate partnerships with donors and increased support for resilience building activities such as FFA and FFT, WFP – in close collaboration with the Government – will explore opportunities for collaboration with new donor partners, including development-focused donors, international financial	December 2021 December 2021

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c) Develop an M&E framework for assessing both the short- and longer-term results of FFA and FFT.		<p>institutions, private sector entities and foundations. Multi-year funding will be sought with a view to ensuring the sustained implementation of activities.</p> <p>c) For the ICSP, the country office has elaborated a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework in accordance with corporate guidance. Implementation will start in 2019, and the framework will help in the assessment of short- and longer-term results of FFA and FFT programmes.</p>	December 2019
Recommendation 4: Gender and protection issues WFP should strengthen the integration of gender and protection considerations in programming: a) Review the existing terms of reference for the policy officer position with a view to ensuring a more equal and visible integration of responsibilities for addressing gender and protection concerns, or establish a dedicated position for gender and protection issues. b) Request a standby gender and protection officer and capitalize on the regional protection and gender adviser through more regular collaboration and exchange. c) Assess the impact of various transfer modalities on intra-household and community dynamics, including gender and protection dynamics, and use the results to inform programme design.	Country office, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management recognizes the importance of ensuring that consideration of gender and protection issues is integrated into programming and will prioritize efforts to improve such integration by mainstreaming gender and protection issues throughout the ICSP.</p> <p>a) and b) The country office has reviewed the terms of reference for the policy officer position and a gender and protection officer position is now included in the ICSP budget. Establishment and resourcing of the position will commence during the ICSP and the country office will consider requesting standby capacity for sourcing and resourcing while the position is being established. The country office will continue to work closely with regional counterparts during the process.</p> <p>c) As part of regular monitoring and evaluation activities, quantitative and qualitative information on gender and protection dynamics will be collected and a comparative analysis of the effects of transfer modalities on intra-household and community dynamics will be carried out in order to inform programme design and adjustment.</p>	December 2019 December 2021

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d) Strengthen the capacities of cooperating partners in gender and protection analysis.		d) As a core element of capacity strengthening under the ICSP, the country office will emphasize the importance of improving partners' capacity for mainstreaming gender and protection issues in programmes and monitoring activities.	December 2018
Recommendation 5: Targeting WFP should improve the targeting of beneficiaries, including internally displaced persons: a) Promote the equal and active participation of women and girls using participatory methodologies to ensure the participation of communities, including internally displaced persons, in the design of targeting criteria and entitlements.	Country office, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management fully recognizes the criticality of effective targeting backed up by sufficient feedback mechanisms to ensure that WFP assistance reaches the people most in need in Somalia.</p> <p>a) The food security cluster has prepared community-based targeting guidelines for Somalia. Based on these guidelines and the targeting criteria and priorities identified in the ICSP (which include the equitable involvement of women and men in community-based participatory planning), WFP will review the targeting process through a process of community participation, taking advantage of other ongoing initiatives.</p>	December 2019

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b) Improve communication with beneficiaries on targeting criteria and entitlements.		b) WFP uses three main avenues of communication to engage with communities in Somalia, communicating via cooperating partners, via WFP staff, or directly with beneficiaries through the call centre (feedback mechanism) in order to inform beneficiaries of their entitlements and the targeting criteria. The country office will endeavour to strengthen communication with beneficiaries through training in improved communication with beneficiaries, expansion of the call centre, wider dissemination of the complaint and feedback mechanism through the use of technology, and an increase in the range of technical information provided.	December 2019
c) Continue to closely monitor the distribution of programme benefits.		c) As part of continued efforts to closely monitor programme implementation and the distribution of programme benefits, WFP will strengthen its standard operating procedures for monitoring and evaluation, especially in the areas of targeting, entitlements, protection, gender, and accountability to affected populations.	December 2019

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<p>Recommendation 6: Capacity building WFP should engage in broader inter-agency dialogue for coordinating approaches to planning and implementing capacity building efforts:</p> <p>a) Work in partnership with relevant United Nations agencies on conducting thorough capacity assessments of selected partner ministries to provide the basis for identifying specific areas where WFP has a comparative advantage for capacity building, such as food security analysis.</p> <p>b) In consultation with the monitoring unit at headquarters, strengthen tools and capacities for monitoring and evaluating capacity building activities.</p>	<p>Country office, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters</p>	<p>Agreed. WFP is deeply committed to working closely with federal and state structures and humanitarian and development stakeholders and supporting them in strengthening the capacity of national institutions to assist food-insecure and vulnerable Somalis.</p> <p>a) During consultations on the ICSP throughout Somalia, the Government and stakeholders identified several areas where capacity development is needed in order to achieve zero hunger: social protection and safety nets, nutrition, food systems, food security, and disaster management and early warning. In response, the country office established strategic outcome 5 under the ICSP, which focuses specifically on capacity strengthening in these priority areas. The country office will coordinate closely with core stakeholders in undertaking a capacity mapping where appropriate in each of the areas and will elaborate a three-year development plan for major government counterparts based on the comparative advantages of each entity with a view to maximizing the use of available resources and avoiding the duplication of efforts.</p> <p>b) With the support of headquarters and the regional bureau in Nairobi, under the ICSP, the country office will endeavour to measure the new outcome indicator for capacity building. Progress benchmarks for each capacity strengthening area will be identified at the beginning of the project with the agreement of all stakeholders and will provide the base for the monitoring framework of the programme throughout its duration. Monitoring results will ultimately provide information regarding whether the programme is on track for meeting its proposed deliverables or whether adjustments to activities are needed, and for reviewing achievements at the end of the programme.</p>	December 2019 December 2019

<p>Recommendation 7: Nutrition and health</p> <p>WFP should engage with the Ministry of Health on annual strategic planning and provide support to the integration of nutrition monitoring data into the Ministry's existing health management information system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with FSNAU and other nutrition cluster partners with a view to deepening analysis of the causes of food and nutrition insecurity. b) Ensure that nutrition centres have a contingency plan for treating all malnourished children. c) Disaggregate coverage figures to identify the differences in coverage among urban areas, rural areas and settlements of internally displaced persons, and closely monitor re-admissions to TSF programmes to ensure that stopping family rations has not resulted in children being readmitted to TSF programmes for treating malnutrition. d) Change the transfer modality for the delivery incentive from food to CBTs and consider whether to continue providing it to mothers or switch to providing it to traditional birth attendants. e) Reinvigorate anti-retroviral therapy and TB-DOTS programmes by providing appropriate support for both clients and their households. 	<p>Country office, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management remains deeply committed to engaging with the Ministry of Health throughout the design and implementation of nutrition activities while also improving nutrition monitoring in order to facilitate the effective provision of nutrition assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) WFP will continue to engage with the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) and nutrition cluster partners in discussions and analysis of the causes of food and nutrition insecurity with a view to deepening understanding. b) WFP will put in place measures for ensuring that therapeutic supplementary feeding centres have contingency plans for admitting and treating all the malnourished children referred to them. Measures will include the development of standard operating procedures and work with partners on advocacy for the admission and treatment of all malnourished children. c) The WFP nutrition database will provide disaggregated figures on the coverage of programmes for urban, rural and internally displaced populations. WFP will maintain its monthly monitoring of readmission figures, cross-checking the figures against data on readmissions collected before the family rations were discontinued. d) WFP will examine the possibility of switching the transfer modality from in-kind food assistance to cash-based transfers (CBTs) for the "delivery incentive" under the mother-and-child health and nutrition programme during implementation of the ICSP. WFP will also explore the opportunities for supporting traditional birth attendants. e) With a dedicated staff member in the nutrition unit, WFP will continue to support malnourished clients receiving anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and directly observed treatment, short course for tuberculosis (TB-DOTS) by providing nutrition assistance and will advocate for consistent resources and support to this initiative in order to facilitate sustained implementation. Subject to the 	<p>December 2021</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p>
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f) Expand social and behaviour change communication to communities and the wider public, targeting men and change agents such as community leaders.		<p>availability of resources and taking prioritized needs into consideration, WFP will explore opportunities for providing support to the households of TB-DOTS and ART clients supported by WFP.</p> <p>f) Expansion of social and behaviour change communication is a central element of the ICSP, incorporated into activities under strategic outcomes 1, 2 and 3. WFP will review existing social and behaviour change communication materials and extend the audiences for communications, including to men and community leaders.</p>	December 2019
Recommendation 8: School meals WFP should position and evaluate the contribution of school meals as part of an inter-agency education strategy: a) Coordinate and report on school meals as part of the education cluster rather than the food security cluster. b) Align operational decision making with an education objective, such as the selection of participating schools. c) Implement the postponed Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) diagnostic with the Ministry of Education.	Country office, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management is committed to engaging further with education stakeholders in order to ensure that the role of school meals in supporting education outcomes is recognized and embedded in education strategies.</p> <p>a) WFP will engage and coordinate with the education cluster in the enhancement of existing collaboration, including in reporting to the education cluster.</p> <p>b) Under the ICSP, schools targeted for the school meals programme will be selected in accordance with the strategic plan for the education sector for 2017-2021 with a view to fostering greater educational attainment and retention in school.</p> <p>c) In partnership with the ministries of education in the governments of Somaliland and Puntland, WFP will organize SABER workshops with relevant stakeholders in order to assess the status of school meal programmes.</p>	December 2020 December 2019 December 2019

Acronyms used in the document

ART	anti-retroviral therapy
CBT	cash-based transfer
FFA	food assistance for assets
FFT	food assistance for training
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
TB-DOTS	directly observed treatment, short course, for tuberculosis
TSF	targeted supplementary feeding
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund