Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Sudan

Standard Project Report 2017

World Food Programme in Sudan, Republic of (SD)
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Country Context and WFP Objectives

In 2017, WFP assisted around 3.6 million food insecure people in Sudan. The food security situation in many parts of the country, including Darfur, the Kordofan States, White Nile and Blue Nile is likely to remain very critical throughout 2018. This is due to the deteriorating macro economic context, widespread levels of poverty, high levels of malnutrition, localized harvest failures and the large number of internally displaced persons and refugees living in camps. These last categories are particularly impacted by the food security and nutrition context due to their limited access to livelihoods and coping mechanisms. However, 2017 was a year of significant strategic and operational achievements for WFP in Sudan, including the approval of the Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP), which puts additional emphasis on the humanitarian-development nexus, self-reliance and government ownership of the programmes.

Together with its partners, WFP Sudan has made leaps and bounds in progress towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 2 of Zero Hunger. The ICSP 2017-2019, saw an expansion of WFP's
strategic objectives with an increased focus on long-term life-changing activities in addition to its primary emergency response capacity. Numerous achievements were celebrated across both emergency and long-term project implementation.

One example of this long-term approach was the successful completion of the Joint Resilience Programme (JRP). This was completed together with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations' Children's Fund in Kassala. This project provided a model for joint integrated programming in building resilience of communities and local systems in eastern Sudan. These programmes included increasing self-reliance of households, building resilient food systems and increasing local capacity to boost markets and the economy.

This is achieved through programmes such as Farmers to Markets, whereby WFP connects small-holder farmers to local markets to increase their livelihoods. WFP Sudan hopes to replicate such models under the ICSP and subsequent Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023, in the coming years, building on successes and lessons learned. Indicators of success found in the Annual Survey of the JRP include a 9 percent decrease in stunting in children under the age of two in 2017, a 20 percent increase in households cultivating crops or undertaking home gardening, and the training of 1,200 women in literacy and numeracy.

Another example of WFP strengthening local markets was the increase in locally purchased sorghum. 433,270 mt was produced for use in the country as well as providing for regional operations, the largest amount ever. WFP Sudan is at the final stage of its first purchase of sorghum from the Agriculture Bank of Sudan, in addition to a potential strategic partnership agreement with the Strategic Grain Reserve, both of which support local Sudanese farmers and boost the national economy. This significant increase in locally procured commodities illustrates Sudan's potential to become a food hub for this region.

WFP Sudan already supports WFP in South Sudan to reach people in need who are inaccessible from Juba, due to insecurity and/or lack of road infrastructure. A total of 48,000 mt of food has been delivered to South Sudan in 2017, including 10,000 mt airdropped from Nazareth, Ethiopia. Fifteen percent of the total deliveries into South Sudan in 2017 came from Sudan. This is mainly due to the opening of two new corridors, El Obeid – Aweil (White Nile to Northern Bahr El Ghazal state), Kosti - Bentiu/Rubkona (White Nile to Unity State) in addition to the current Juda-Renk corridor (White Nile to Upper Nile State).

Finally, WFP supported the Government of Sudan in finalising the Zero Hunger Strategic Review, pathing the way forward for the entire humanitarian and development community in Sudan. The Sudan Zero Hunger Strategic Review is a collaborative effort, led and guided by the Government. It also involves Sudan's best food security and nutrition specialists, with the goal of helping the Government and partners formulate effective and viable programmes to achieve Zero Hunger in Sudan by 2030. It is an embodiment of the humanitarian and development community's collective commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Through this review, the Government, donors, non-governmental-organisations and the United Nations family can together design a way forward, better aligning programming and approaches to meet the changing dynamics across Sudan. The review is currently with the Government for final endorsement.

Country Context and Response of the Government

The lifting of sanctions on Sudan has opened up new opportunities for the country to achieve greater and faster social and economic development. While Sudan continues to face major challenges – including a high level of diverse humanitarian need and exposure to risks of conflict and natural hazards – the situation can serve as a turning point to break away from decades plagued by fragility.

At present, 4.8 million [1] people in Sudan are in need of humanitarian assistance and although many of the conflicts generating these needs are declining, the vulnerabilities of affected communities remain acute. The recent inflow of refugees from bordering countries has increased the need for humanitarian assistance across Sudan with 192,400 new arrivals from South Sudan in 2017 most of which are in White Nile state, 60,400, and East Darfur, 46,000 [2], in addition to the 104,000 returning Sudanese refugees. More than two million people in Darfur (one-third of the entire Darfur population) continue to be displaced, while an estimated 240,000 [3] people were displaced in Blue Nile and Kordofan States following conflict. Regular and unconditional humanitarian access to affected populations continues to be a priority for humanitarian and development actors across the country.

Sudan's economy depends heavily on the agricultural sector, which contributes to one-third of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs 80 percent of the labour force [4]. Agriculture in Sudan is mostly rain-fed, and the extensive application of marginal, low-productivity and climate-sensitive production makes the country's food system extremely vulnerable to climate variability and climate change [5]. Inadequate harvest and post-harvest operations lead to significant food losses. On average about 96,000 tons (between 7-20 percent) of wheat are annually lost during the harvest in Gezira [6], a quantity sufficient to feed over 2 million people for an entire year.
Moderate and severe acute malnutrition, measured as wasting, is highly prevalent in Sudan, especially among children under five years of age and women of child bearing age. There are currently 2.2 million children in Sudan under the age of five who are acutely malnourished [7]. This problem exists in both conflict-affected areas and stable states such as Red Sea, where 20 percent of children are wasted. This is due to a combination of factors: poor quality of health services, unfavourable hygiene and sanitation conditions, poor child caring practices, traditional dietary habits, poor access to food and marginal and unstable livelihoods [8]. These contribute to more than two million children under five years being stunted.

Gender inequality is one of the strongest deterrents to women and girls' well-being, forming a hindrance to Sudan's development agenda. However, although fewer women (25 percent) are participating in the labour force compared to men (72 percent), the women play a crucial role in agriculture, contributing to GDP and to household food security. Of note, Sudanese women are increasingly playing a more visible role in society, for example currently women hold 31 percent of the national assembly.

In the 2015 Gender Inequality Index, Sudan ranked 140 out of 159 countries. The conflict in Sudan triggered an increase in female-headed households, and an increased burden on women and girls, who must now provide physical, financial and other support to their families. Despite ongoing response efforts, the main concerns for women and girls are: lack of access to basic services, inadequate livelihood opportunities, exclusion from decision-making, and threats to personal safety, including the risk of gender-based violence. Males of all age groups face considerable risks, particularly those in conflict zones. Male unemployment rates are also high, forcing many to migrate seeking jobs.

In order to measure and address these humanitarian and development challenges, the Government of Sudan employed a team of nutrition and food-security specialists to conduct the Zero Hunger Strategic Review, paving the way forward for a holistic approach to meeting the needs of its people. The review engages all relevant actors from the humanitarian and development community to develop the next steps towards achieving Zero Hunger in Sudan by 2030.


WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

Over the past year, WFP Sudan has undergone a significant process of self-reflection to better align its programming and approaches to meet the changing dynamics across Sudan. The result is the Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) 2017–2019, which constitutes the first step towards WFP’s five-year planning cycle. In this transition, WFP is adopting life changing activities that support self-reliance and resilience-building of women, men and children, strengthen country and individual capacities, all while maintaining flexibility and its renowned emergency response capacity. To fight hunger effectively, WFP and partners must recognize and address both the symptoms of hunger, and build solutions that target the challenges of hunger at its core. Interventions that address root-causes of hunger can and must be implemented at scale. The ICSP will guide WFP’s strategic and programmatic planning to ensure that it maintains its agility in emergency response while paving the way for longer-term solutions to hunger in Sudan.

WFP Sudan built on pre-existing strong partnerships with the Government of Sudan, in particular with state level government institutions, the Humanitarian Aid Commission and the Ministry of International Cooperation. This includes support to the Ministry of Health through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative, continuing to work with the Ministry of Education to implement the System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) road map towards a national school feeding programme, working with the Ministry of Agriculture to enhance food security.
analysis and tackle the problem of post-harvest losses and, finally, collaborating with the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security to enhance the national social protection systems and promote gender-transformative policies, planning and programming.

WFP Sudan was closely involved in the Sudan Zero Hunger Strategic Review, a collaborative effort led and guided by the Government, and owned by Sudan's leading food security and nutrition specialists to help the Government and partners formulate effective and viable programmes to achieve Zero Hunger in Sudan by 2030. It is an embodiment of the humanitarian and development community’s collective commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and will guide WFP Sudan's transition to its Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023. Through this review, the Government, donors, non-governmental organisations and the United Nations family, can together design a way forward to better align programming and approaches to meet the changing dynamics across Sudan.

WFP also strengthened partnerships with sister United Nations agencies. In addition to being an active member of both the Humanitarian Country Team and United Nations Country Team, WFP consolidated strategic agreements with many fellow agencies including the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Environment Programme, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on which it hopes to further build collaboration based on the ICSP.

The most common forms of micronutrient deficiencies in Sudan are iron deficiency anaemia, Vitamin A deficiency, and iodine deficiency disorder, which affect at least one quarter of the Sudanese population. WFP is combatting micronutrient deficiencies across the country through a newly developed branded micronutrient supplement, called Vitamino. The first in Sudan, Vitamino will ensure the wider availability and acceptability of vitamins and minerals essential for a child's development in local markets. WFP's strategy for delivering micronutrient powder includes a market-based approach (through retail platforms), accompanied by key social and behavioural change communication messages.

Considering that women are increasingly playing a more visible role in Sudanese society, WFP has committed gender integration into the implementation and monitoring of the ICSP, ensuring that gender-transformative programmes and policies contribute to its outcomes. WFP's strategic planning will also address the specific needs of the youth of Sudan, recognising that approximately 60 percent of the population is below 24.
Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

During 2017, WFP Sudan raised USD 259 million out of the total requirement of USD 392 million, allowing WFP Sudan to assist 3.2 million people across the country. This was done through a variety of life-saving and life-changing programmes, ranging from cash-based transfers to nutrition treatment for children and nursing mothers.

Nevertheless, the external fundraising environment remains challenging including competing appeals for emergency funding, donor fatigue and a limited donor base. During the funding shortfalls, using vulnerability mapping, WFP targeted the most vulnerable people, leading to a prioritisation of life-saving interventions under Strategic Outcomes 1 and 2.

The increase in donor earmarking at activity level, due to the transition to the Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) in July, along with requests to target specific beneficiaries has diminished flexibility and requires additional effort in planning and cost allocation. Additionally, WFP Sudan received short-term support for most development activities. Structural changes in development require longer-term investment to carry out the necessary preparatory work and implement quality projects. Multi-year funding agreements with government partners have allowed for greater flexibility in programmatic implementation and strategic planning.

In order to address funding challenges, in January 2017 WFP established a core donor working group, comprised of WFP’s main and largest donors. The group meets monthly to discuss operational and strategic priorities, challenges in implementation and resourcing needs. This consultative approach to project implementation has not only enhanced trust among members and enabled WFP to alert donors to potential concerns before they become issues on the ground, but also streamlined information requests into a consolidated format, reducing the number of ad-hoc reporting demands placed on the donor relations unit.

WFP Sudan maintains positive relationships with core donors, and anticipates strong advocacy from all donors for WFP programmes. Government partners were consulted throughout the development of the ICSP, especially with regard to the formulation of the Strategic Outcomes; they expressed their support for the strategic orientation.

Furthermore, the Country Office has initiated the Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 process with the drafting of the line of sight, taking into account the learnings from the ICSP formulation and implementation processes as well as the inputs from the recently completed Country Strategic Review. Preliminary consultations on the line of sight are currently being done with donors, Cooperating Partners and other United Nations agencies.

Alternatively, private partnerships can be a source of flexible resources that can be allocated to underfunded activities with minimal requirement for detailed reporting. With the objectives of the CSP to further engage not only traditional donors but also non-traditional donors including the private sector, private sector partnerships should be explored.

In line with the ICSP, WFP Sudan will continue to invest in capacity strengthening of national and local civil-society partners to promote food and nutrition security. South–South and triangular cooperation will be promoted in all initiatives. The Country Office will continue to adopt best practices that can be replicated and provide staff, partners and government officials with opportunities to learn from lessons learned in other countries. Exchanges of technical staff between countries will also be promoted.
Supply Chain

WFP Sudan received, cleared and delivered over 128,000 mt of assorted food items to over 330 locations across the country. In addition, WFP Sudan provided critical support to WFP South Sudan by delivering over 48,000 mt of food from Kosti and El Obeid to Renk, Bentiu and Aweil.

Beyond delivering food, WFP's Supply Chain function is embracing an enabling role. In line with the implementation of the Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP), WFP Sudan is constantly reviewing and improving the way in which it delivers assistance to those most in need. WFP Sudan's application of cash-based transfers (CBT) activities is becoming ever more effective and efficient based on detailed micro and retail supply chain assessments, enabling WFP to select the strongest retail partners. This ensures that beneficiaries have access to a variety of foods that meet their dietary requirements and correspond to their preferences. The logistics unit further supports CBT activities by continuously monitoring the country's supply chain, ensuring an uninterrupted supply as well as food quality assurance. In 2017, a market study was carried out with the objective of developing a sustainable retail industry, lowering the market prices to increase beneficiaries purchasing power and to reduce the overall costs for WFP.

WFP manages a fleet of 109 vehicles which are used for deep-field transport to areas which commercial transporters are unable or unwilling to access. Most recently, the fleet was used to access newly opened areas in Jabel Marra reaching over 100,000 internally displaced people.

WFP is the lead agency of the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Sector and is mandated to coordinate the humanitarian logistics response. Six United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations – the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the United Nations Children Fund, Care International, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and the United Nations Populations Fund - signed a service level agreement with WFP in 2017 for bilateral logistics services, usually related to storage of relief items.

Most recently, procurement in Sudan was focused on increasing locally sourced produce not only for in-country operations but for WFP activities in the entire region, including neighbouring countries of Somalia, South Sudan, Kenya and Chad. By boosting the local economy and strengthening the capacity of local farmers, WFP hopes to restore Sudan to its previous role of bread-basket of the region.
Project Results

Activities and Operational Partnerships

United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) operations were established in Sudan in 2004, providing humanitarians with access to difficult-to-reach locations across the country.

In line with WFP’s Strategic Results Framework, the objectives of the Special Operation (SO) 201043 for January – June 2017 were:

- To provide NGOs, UN agencies, donor organisations and diplomatic missions in Sudan with safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites;
- To transport light cargo such as medical supplies, high energy foods and information and communications technology equipment; and
- To provide adequate capacity for evacuations of humanitarian staff.

UNHAS works closely with a number of stakeholders which includes NGOs, other UN agencies and donors. Stakeholder meetings were organised on a regular basis. UNHAS coordinated its activities with the Humanitarian Coordinator's office and with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to ensure that the operation is run in alignment with the Country Humanitarian Response Plan. UNHAS activities are guided by users' demands and expressed needs. UNHAS conducted quarterly Steering Committee (SC) meetings in Khartoum and monthly User Group meetings in Khartoum and in the three state capitals in Darfur namely, Nyala, El Fasher and El Geneina. The role of the SC is to focus on policy and funding modalities, providing feedback to the Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) to help ensure a high service quality. At User Group Committee meetings, UNHAS was able to get timely feedback and encourage open discussions on service level against demand both on capacity and flight frequency within the established schedule. In addition, the need to add location(s) or reduce frequency to destination(s) was deliberated on in these meetings.

The SO was originally planned for January - December 2017, however it was migrated to WFP Sudan's Interim Country Strategic Plan 2017 - 2019 in correspondence with its implementation in July. From January to June 2017, UNHAS operated two fixed-wing aircraft and three helicopters, which were strategically based in Khartoum, El Fasher, El Geneina and Nyala. UNHAS has played a critical role in the transportation of humanitarian staff and relief items to the country’s millions of displaced people. Despite challenges, such as insecurity, funding visibility and the slow and uncertain process of obtaining operational permits, UNHAS has maintained uninterrupted air access to affected populations on behalf of over 70 humanitarian organisations. The service transports an average of 21,600 passengers to over 43 destinations on a yearly basis. During the period January to June 2017, five charter flights were performed on behalf of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WFP, to various locations including Nyala, Kenana, Kadugli, Kassala, and Damazine.

UNHAS operated one 37-seat EMB-135 aircraft, one 17-seat turboprop BE-1900 and three 18-seat MI-8 helicopters. The EMB-135 and BE-1900 provided shuttle services from Khartoum to the three Darfur state capitals and to Kadugli in South Kordofan, Damazine and Kassala as required. The helicopters provided access to deep-field locations that cannot be reached otherwise because of lack of facilities for fixed-wing aircraft.

The project implemented standard WFP management structures and support systems including the following:

- Passenger and cargo bookings made through appropriate management structures, ensuring the dissemination of flight schedules and manifests to all locations.
- A dedicated communication system to monitor the progress of all flights through VHF/HF radios and satellite tracking systems.
- The web-based electronic system that enables on-line booking requests and the service by various agencies and monitoring of load factors, operational trends and costs.
- Structured flight schedules (weekly and monthly) to ensure flexibility and accommodate special flights.

UNHAS continues to maintain strong links with Civil Aviation Authorities, Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) and other relevant local authorities at both Khartoum and state levels.

As an aid enabler, UNHAS continues to align its services to the needs of user organisations. It achieves this through constant engagement with the User Group Meetings (UGM), the Steering Committee and bilateral engagement with key users and the Humanitarian Country Team. The UGM provides a platform for all users to influence the operations and to ensure that their operational travel needs are met. Its role is limited to administrative matters and
include decisions on the destinations to be served and weekly flight schedules and/or to the quality of service. In addition to the UGM, the Steering Committee provides strategic guidance to UNHAS. The SC is responsible for establishing administrative policies that detail eligibility of organisations, priority of passengers and cargo and cost recovery procedures. It also determines service management based on upcoming needs. UNHAS collaborates with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to obtain timely information on security at the areas of operation.

During the reporting period, UNHAS worked closely with the United Nations - African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) to provide security for landing zones and improve overall safety of ground operations in these areas, UNAMID also provided backup capabilities when UNHAS did not have sufficient capacity.

**Results**

In the first half of 2017, there were 186 international and national humanitarian organisations in Sudan of which 86 percent are operational in Darfur (165 organisations). However, in recent years, a number of International Organisations have closed their operations in parts of Darfur. This has been mainly due to funding shortages and restricted operating environments, as the operational capacity of humanitarian partners is closely linked to sustained and unfettered access.

Between 1 January and 30 June 2017, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) in Sudan transported 10,614 passengers and 50 mt of cargo across 43 locations. UNHAS enabled its 73 user organisations to implement their life-saving and life-changing projects in the otherwise impossible-to-reach areas of Sudan such as recently opened parts of Jabel Marra in West Darfur. It also carried out 3 medical evacuations. Due to the influx of South Sudan refugees and poor road conditions, an inter-agency assessment flight was planned to El Radom in South Darfur led by UNHCR.

**Performance Monitoring**

In order to determine the air transport needs of the humanitarian community, a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses were conducted on a regular basis.

Assessments were conducted through one or a combination of the following activities:

- Collaboration with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) ensures that all the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) passengers fall under the mandatory criteria of humanitarian and/or development actors as HAC is responsible for the vetting process of travel permits and humanitarian access.
- UNHAS Steering Committee meetings composed of a chairperson to NGOs Forum, UN agencies and donor representatives. The Steering Committee (SC) is co-chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the WFP Country Director. The role of the SC is administrative and provides feedback to the Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) to help ensure high service quality. In addition to SC meetings, User Group meetings were conducted on a monthly basis in the three main Darfur Capitals.
- Two types of surveys were carried out in the reporting period. The Passenger Satisfaction Survey directed to UNHAS passengers and the Provision of Access Survey directed to heads of organizations. UNHAS continuously pursues consultations with users (NGOs, UN, donors, etc.) by organizing bilateral meetings and attending humanitarian forums when applicable. Using results sourced from these surveys, UNHAS is able to evaluate its operations in relation to meeting user needs, service quality and make changes accordingly such as adding new destinations or amending flight schedules.
- Quantitative flight statistics (number of user entities and destinations served; passengers and cargo transported; hours flown) were analysed regularly. WFP Aviation developed a Performance Management Tool (PMT). With the PMT, trends can be automatically visualized and the level of performance established, measured in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, in order to identify strategic and operational areas for improvement. This allows the Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) to make informed decision and take appropriate action to ensure that the common service continues to improve both in efficiency and effectiveness.
- A customer feedback email sudan.askunhas@wfp.org is also maintained for discrete feedback from customers.

**Progress Towards Gender Equality**
Figures and Indicators

Data Notes
Cover page photo © WFP / ImadEldin Ibrahim
An UNHAS helicopter carrying a visiting delegation leaving a haffir (water catchment) rehabilitation area, Um Haraza area, North Kordofan State.

Project Indicators

Output Indicators

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<th>Output</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>% Actual vs. Planned</th>
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<td>Average no. of passengers transported monthly by air</td>
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<td>Percentage response to medical and security evacuation</td>
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