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Update on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 (repositioning the United Nations development system)

1. This information note builds on the update presented to the Board at its 2018 second regular session (WFP/2018/EB.2/5) to provide additional information on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279,¹ on repositioning the United Nations development system (UNDS) and its financial and other implications for WFP, for the information of the Board at its 2019 first regular session as requested by the Bureau. The note focuses on the progress of UNDS reform, the nature of WFP's ongoing involvement in the reform efforts and the implications of reform for WFP, in terms of both opportunities and risks.

Introduction

2. The various elements of reform are moving forward at different speeds, with some still evolving. A reinvigorated resident coordinator system, which includes the establishment of the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO), was launched on 1 January 2019. A guiding document on country-, regional- and global-level accountabilities, the Management and Accountabilities Framework (MAF), is currently being developed, as is guidance on revitalized United Nations development assistance frameworks (UNDAF). A system-wide strategic document (SWSD), a funding compact between the UNDS and Member States, a multi-country office review and the second phase of a regional review are all still in progress and are to be concluded by April 2019 for consideration during the operational activities for development segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which will take place from 21 to 23 May 2019. The strengthening of

¹ General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/72/279).

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system-wide reporting and efforts to consolidate business operations and premises are expected to be worked on through 2021.

3. WFP supports and remains strongly committed to the objectives of United Nations development system reform as a means of delivering stronger results on the ground and supporting Member States in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). WFP continues its active engagement in the reform process, including in New York, at headquarters and in the field. WFP's Executive Director continues to co-chair the business innovations group that is working to promote common business operations and premises. In addition, WFP is actively supporting the UNDAF design team including having helped facilitate aspects of the drafting of new UNDAF guidance and is actively and constructively engaging in the development of key products, including the funding compact and the MAF, and in the work of the Joint Steering Committee to advance humanitarian and development collaboration.
4. A WFP senior task team on UNDS reform, which cuts across functional areas of the organization, continues to engage actively in the reform efforts, bringing an integrated corporate perspective to bear in keeping WFP's senior management apprised of developments and their implications for WFP.
5. WFP is working with sister agencies and with the other Rome-based agencies towards common approaches to UNDS reform. Its work with the latter is part of broader collaboration and coordination, through a senior consultative group, on issues such as a Rome-based agencies joint action plan and joint Sahel and country action plans in selected countries.

WFP reform preparedness

6. WFP held a second workshop at headquarters on 30 November 2018, bringing together headquarters, regional and country-level leadership to deliberate on UNDS reform implications and how to anticipate and prepare for reforms, as well as to identify areas of positive engagement. The workshop participants agreed on a series of measures that should be taken forward, including the development of guidance for country representatives, and highlighted a number of opportunities for engagement.
7. WFP will more proactively engage with the resident coordinator system at all levels, as part of efforts to enhance the collective ownership of the system. Three WFP staff members currently serve as resident coordinators. WFP will encourage staff to pursue career opportunities in the resident coordinator system and will support them in doing so. This will include support for senior staff applying for resident coordinator positions and the secondment of mid-level officers to resident coordinator offices and the UN Development Coordination Office. WFP is also looking at working with sister operational agencies and the Rome-based agencies to increase the number of candidates from those organizations on the resident coordinator roster.
8. There is also an opportunity for WFP to build on its data-related work to support system-wide analysis efforts, including by enhancing WFP's vulnerability assessment and mapping capacity to inform UNDAF design and support the United Nations' delivery to beneficiaries and engaging in the shaping of the approach to joint assessment, analysis and evaluation (both system-wide and specifically for UNDAFs).
9. As a dual-mandated agency, with strong humanitarian and development analysis capacity and programming, WFP, where relevant, will also proactively work to make the best possible use of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.
10. The workshop also highlighted opportunities for WFP to enhance its approach to partnership, and to that end key stakeholders will come together at the end of March to discuss ways in which WFP can optimize its partnering approaches and capacity and embed

improved partnering behaviours. Discussions have also started with sister agencies, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on its integrator role and on how the agencies can better work together.

Reinvigorating the role of the resident coordinator system

Roles and responsibilities under the reinvigorated resident coordinator system

11. On 1 January 2019, the reinvigorated resident coordinator system was launched with the aim of strengthening the authority and leadership of resident coordinators, as the highest-ranking representatives of the United Nations development system, over United Nations country teams, and system-wide accountability on the ground for implementing United Nations development assistance frameworks and supporting countries in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As part of this process, a new resident coordinator job description was approved, and a new system-wide management and accountability framework is in the process of being developed under the leadership of the UNDS reform transition team.
12. At time of writing, some concerns remain on country-level accountabilities as detailed in the draft management and accountability framework. WFP and other agencies' top management are fully engaged in finding constructive solutions to the issues, such that, in line with the Secretary-General's assurances, the reforms will not undermine the responsibility and accountability of the agencies' leadership in delivering on their individual agency mandates under the guidance of their governing bodies.
13. Once the country-level management and accountability framework has been concluded, and in the light of the new resident coordinator job description, WFP will review the job descriptions of its own country representatives and update them to ensure that they are aligned with the new resident coordinator job description and with the mutual accountabilities for collective outcomes being agreed in the management and accountability framework, including the establishment of a clear, matrixed, dual reporting model. WFP's performance appraisal system (PACE) for country representatives will also be updated and will incorporate indicators that reflect the new mutual accountabilities and link to objectives laid out in their countries' UNDAFs.
14. The country level management and accountability framework for United Nations country teams should be provisional while the corresponding regional and global frameworks are worked out and should include operationalization of the collective ownership of the UNDOCO and resident coordinator system by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, as called for by resolution 72/279.

Funding the resident coordinator system

15. WFP will engage in negotiations expected in the second half of 2019 on the revision of the agency cost-share formula for 2020 and will inform the Executive Board of any budgetary implications. The current cost-share formula includes an exemption for humanitarian funding, which WFP expects will remain in place.
16. WFP has been engaged in system-wide efforts to determine the best way to operationalize the 1 percent coordination levy on tightly earmarked third-party non-core contributions to United Nations development-related activities. System-wide guidance on the levy, as well as WFP internal guidance for its country offices, is currently being prepared. At present, the system-wide guidance compiled by the Fiduciary Management Oversight Group of the United Nations system provides that the levy will apply to funding for WFP's "root causes" focus area only, and a clause to this effect will be included in all relevant contribution agreements. WFP continues to encourage donors to provide additional funding for the payment of the 1percent levy so that its payment does not come at the expense of

programme implementation. Furthermore, WFP is encouraging donors to make direct payments to the United Nations Secretariat Special Purpose Trust Fund for the resident coordinator system in order to limit the transactional cost of the levy.

A new generation of United Nations country teams

Revitalized United Nations development assistance framework system

17. Work on revitalized UNDAF guidance is under way through a collaborative inter-agency process. WFP is part of the UNDAF design team and has helped to facilitate the drafting of the new guidance. WFP also leads the workstream on the development of the next-generation common country analysis, which is intended to become a standing United Nations function, rather than a one-off exercise, providing ongoing analysis to reflect situational developments and inform the United Nations' work on a continuing basis. The revitalized UNDAF guidance is expected to be finalized by the end of March 2019.
18. With the UNDAF intended to become the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of United Nations development activities, the guidance envisages a high-level strategic UNDAF that captures, in an integrated manner, both country-specific priorities and the United Nations' added value. The new approach requires that all United Nations entity country programme priorities and outcomes be derived from the UNDAF. Subsequently, WFP's own internal guidance on country strategic plans (CSP) will be updated to reflect how the UNDAF will inform CSP design with regard to development-related activities. Simultaneously, WFP will continue to work towards close alignment of its CSP cycles with UNDAFs as countries adopt the new approach. WFP is well placed to respond to this approach in line with its own strategic plan and the Integrated Road Map.

United Nations country team presence and composition

19. The UNDAF is expected to be the basis for a new generation of United Nations country teams, finalized through open and inclusive dialogue between host governments and the UNDS. WFP is already working to ensure that its country presence is country-context-specific, needs-based and fit for purpose; to that end it has carried out a review of its country presence and operating models with a view to phased implementation of the approved review findings from 2020.
20. Concurrently, to ensure that United Nations country teams and staff have the appropriate skill sets and capacities to support countries in attaining the SDGs, efforts are under way to enhance capacity building, including through the establishment of a United Nations learning advisory council for the 2030 Agenda that will enhance SDG knowledge, learning and expertise across the UNDS. WFP will actively participate in these efforts and ensure that country representatives undertake the SDG training as part of their preparation for their roles on United Nations country teams.

Common business operations and common premises

21. In co-leading efforts to further common business operations and premises, WFP continues to actively participate in and support a full-time inter-agency project team that includes representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Population Fund. Efforts have seen some 11 entities, including the Secretary-General on behalf of the Secretariat, sign a statement on mutual recognition of each other's policies and processes to enable consolidation in common back offices at the country level, as requested in the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review² (71/243). WFP's contribution includes the chairing of the inter-agency task team on common premises and facility services, along with active engagement in the business

² See General Assembly resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016.

operation strategy (BOS) task team and development of new and simplified BOS guidance, to enable enhanced inter-agency collaboration and full BOS rollout across all United Nations country teams, in line with the Secretary-General's target.

22. As part of these efforts, WFP's leadership group supports offering WFP services to the wider United Nations system in areas such as engineering and infrastructure surge in emergencies, the Fleet Centre and its global supply chain management and emergency telecommunications cluster (ETC) common services offers, as well as gradual scale-up of services such as WFP's booking hub (humanitarianbooking.wfp.org). This provides 24/7 online access to critical services for the humanitarian community, such as bookings at guesthouses in United Nations facilities and compounds around the world, flights to destinations served by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service worldwide; and appointments at United Nations clinics worldwide. WFP looks forward to contributing to defining the global services that are essential to the success of common back offices.

Revamping the regional approach

23. At time of writing, draft terms of reference for the re-profiling and restructuring of regional assets of the UNDS had just been shared by the transition team. The approach will include the establishment of an internal review team under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General/Special Adviser on Reforms and with representatives of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), all the regional commissions and a number of UNDS entities. The review will be undertaken in two parts, the first being an analysis of UNDS assets at the regional level and the second an analysis of how to optimize the structures, mechanisms and modalities of UNDS regional architecture with a view to making it more effective and efficient. WFP is ready to participate actively in the forthcoming review.

Strategic direction, oversight and accountability for system-wide results

24. To further enhance system-wide efforts in support of the 2030 Agenda, the UNDS reform transition team is currently working on a system-wide strategic document for Member States' consideration that will provide recommendations regarding how to address gaps and overlaps in UNDS coverage. The document will identify the UNDS' comparative advantages and the means by which it can better support efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda in accordance with the respective mandates of its members. WFP will support linked system-wide efforts to strengthen its contribution to system-wide reporting, including through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.
25. Moreover, as part of efforts to strengthen system-wide accountability, WFP's Executive Board Secretariat is working to support the Board and, in coordination with the board secretariats, to improve the working methods of the Boards, including through recommendations to, for example, identify common agenda items for the meetings of the Boards with the aim of strengthening coordination, reducing the number of board sessions and meeting days per year, encouraging focused regional group briefings and expanding access to documentation.

Funding the United Nations development system and partnerships

26. WFP has actively engaged in fast-moving efforts to adopt a funding compact between the UNDS and Member States to improve the flexibility and predictability of resources allocated to the UNDS, in return for greater effectiveness, transparency and accountability on system-wide results. Much progress has been made on the compact, but it is critical that it provide for mutual accountability, and the time for finalizing it is short. As an agency that is fully dependent on voluntary funding, WFP supports opportunities for more flexible and predictable funding and new approaches to innovative financing.

27. WFP remains actively engaged in the development of the Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was established to accelerate progress in the achievement of the SDGs and sits on the operational steering committee for the fund. Against a fund target of USD 290 million, thus far USD 46 million has been deposited, a further USD 65 million committed and an additional USD 130 million pledged. A first call for proposals for integrated policy support for the SDGs is expected in the coming weeks.

Conclusions and next steps

28. With many elements of a reformed UNDS still being developed and expected to be considered at the ECOSOC operational activities segment in May, WFP will continue to closely follow and actively participate in the reform process at all levels and is committed to working with all stakeholders through inter-agency forums towards constructive ways forward, while seeking to mitigate and prepare for any risks posed by the reform change process, particularly with regard to operations on the ground. WFP will continue to reflect on and prepare to operationalize the reforms, including by contributing its expertise in areas of comparative advantage and adjusting its guidance and practices as required to align with the reforms adopted.

Acronyms used in the document

ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDAF	United Nations development assistance framework
UNDS	United Nations development system