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Summary of the work of the 2019 annual session of the Executive Board

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Summary of the work of the 2019 annual session of the Executive Board

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Current and future strategic issues

2019/EB.A/1 Opening remarks by the Executive Director

1. After thanking His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho for his presence at the current session of the Board, the Executive Director drew attention to the current and future strategic questions confronting WFP. He spoke of the overall humanitarian achievements of the previous hundred years, stressing that modern food security and poverty reduction approaches had yielded dramatic improvements; far more people were currently food-secure and out of poverty. Nonetheless, wealth should be shared more equitably and more could be done through partnerships to help the increasing number of people in need of food support. There was, he said, an urgent need to upgrade WFP's systems to maximize their effectiveness, particularly in crises where conflict was a factor, but WFP's financial and human resources were spread too thin. WFP was the acknowledged leader in emergency response capability and in promoting food security as a basis for development, but its focus on major chronic emergencies sometimes meant that support for groups facing other difficulties was reduced.
2. The Executive Director indicated that the way forward must involve changing some of the ways in which WFP worked: its structures were sound but needed adjustment, a more collaborative work paradigm was needed, the digitization process should be advanced and exit strategies based on well-defined timelines and action plans had to become part of all operations to ensure that WFP did not remain in any country longer than necessary. WFP should also continue to increase the use of cash-based transfers (CBTs) as a highly cost-effective modality, find ways to exploit the skills and experience of senior staff to drive reforms through greater dialogue and the elimination of "silos", explore more funding sources such as those dedicated to climate change and gender parity, and address practicalities such as the need to maintain neutrality and respect humanitarian principles and law in responding to and preventing crises.
3. Above all, people wanted and needed self-sufficiency rather than charity. WFP's support for the improvement of agricultural land in poor areas in African countries, for example, had provided new opportunities for young people – and especially women farmers – and had significantly enhanced local economies and women's social status.
4. The Executive Director observed that the regional bureaux and country offices were increasing the ratio of women and that the reporting of sexual and other harassment was also increasing as women felt more confident of their rights and of being heard. Risk management was being re-structured as more non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were engaged, and accountability and management controls were being reviewed accordingly. He added in this regard that the process of digitization was leading to savings and efficiency thanks, for example, to the use of drones in assessments, better use of satellite imagery and the employment of block-chain technology. He also said that WFP was "ahead of the curve" in terms of United Nations innovation, already using new platforms for donations and publicity, and new security controls were being adopted.
5. Overall, the Executive Director pointed the way to placing needy people at the centre of all interventions, working with partners under the humanitarian–development–peace nexus and maximizing effectiveness by re-thinking strategies and adjusting WFP's tools to make them as efficient as possible. He asked the Board to "ask the hard questions" to promote such changes.
6. His Majesty King Letsie III focused his remarks on the impact of malnutrition on development, observing that malnutrition affected a third of the global population and that the pace of work to address the problem was slow, although the work of WFP had yielded significant benefits in Lesotho. He emphasized that because malnutrition-related stunting was a condition that could not be reversed prevention programmes were the only option

and should focus initially on the first 1,000 days after conception, providing sound health and childcare practices with the long-term aim of enabling young people to grow into healthy and productive citizens and to reach their high economic potential. He spoke also of the substantial economic impact of malnutrition, which in Lesotho caused the loss of 11 percent of production and in other countries losses equivalent to 7 percent of gross domestic product. In his opinion, nevertheless, once prevention strategies were integrated into development targets and budgets it was possible to rectify current economic shortfalls and achieve returns of 16:1 on investments in agricultural and other development programmes.

7. His Majesty King Letsie III underscored that health, education and economic outcomes depended ultimately on sound nutrition, for which coordinated partnership programmes with multiple stakeholders and donors that promoted sanitation and hygiene, integrated food systems and access to clean water were essential. He stressed that no individual country or agency could tackle malnutrition alone and that multisectoral international partnerships were fundamental to eliminating the “plague” of malnutrition and stunting, in line with the Malabo Declaration. He concluded by thanking WFP for its support, expressing confidence that country strategic plans (CSPs) would be an effective basis for the prevention of malnutrition.

Question and answer segment

8. Following their remarks, His Majesty King Letsie III and the Executive Director responded to questions from Board members.
9. The Executive Director explained that the need for prioritization in WFP’s operations reflected the fact that WFP was spread too thin. More human and financial resources had to be found. It was also essential to make exit strategies an integral part of any operation to ensure that WFP did not continue to work in the same countries for decades. He said that WFP had to communicate more effectively with other actors to ensure that their programmes were complementary and well coordinated and that it must find more private sector partners. In his opinion it had to be agile in addressing complex situations, deploying skilled work teams with less bureaucracy and greater clarity in identifying the needs of affected populations.
10. He said that the need for multi-year flexible funding was urgent to enable WFP to allocate contributions where they were most needed and to invest in addressing the root causes of hunger and malnutrition. Numerous humanitarian funds existed and should be tapped to ensure that WFP’s work could be optimized. WFP was seeking to establish more comprehensive and multi-year approaches and greater accountability at the regional level.
11. On the issue of home-grown school feeding the Executive Director observed that such programmes reduced teenage pregnancies, increased young people’s engagement in agriculture and improved the nutrition of populations. He also pointed out that WFP bought food worth USD 1.2 billion in African countries and would welcome in-kind support such as trucks from private corporations.
12. His Majesty agreed that private-sector businesses needed to understand the importance of the economic benefits of improved nutrition, such as more efficient workforces, and he repeated the call for more multi-year flexible funding to support WFP’s operations. On the question of Lesotho’s status as a land-locked food-importing country, he said there was evidence that it affected nutrition outcomes, but national policy was to make optimum use of agricultural land.

13. His Majesty King Letsie Ili stressed that young people needed to be encouraged to take part in agricultural and economic development and that better nutrition would increase the national workforce. Home-grown school feeding was a highly effective way to achieve such aims. He also said that the establishment of free trade areas would have a positive effect on nutrition outcomes by promoting access to more food types.

National statements

14. Following the question and answer period Board members made general statements on the matters for discussion at the current session.
15. Board members were unanimous in their praise for the courage and professionalism of WFP field staff in challenging operational contexts and in expressing condolences for the loss of life in the course of duty.
16. Board members emphasized the need for WFP to maintain its strictly non-political stance and to uphold international laws and respect humanitarian principles in implementing its many and varied operations in cases of conflict, natural disaster and phenomena linked to climate change. Board members stressed that there was a clear need to find new and more holistic ways of working, for example through the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, to close serious funding gaps in “forgotten” crises and to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable groups were assisted with the appropriate modalities, with a particular focus on disabled people. It was also said that the key to success lay in establishing multisectoral international and inter-agency partnerships, such as South-South cooperation initiatives, to maximize sustainable results and address cross-cutting issues such as climate change, gender and beneficiary protection. Members added that for them the establishment of new and improved internal controls, risk management, communications systems and data management was also important in this context.
17. Many members said that there was a need to maximize multi-year flexible funding so that WFP was able to allocate its finite resources to optimum effect.
18. Some members stressed that it was necessary to find new funding sources, as the Executive Director had stated, and that it was important to enhance risk management as budgets and financial resources grew to reassure donors that their contributions were used effectively. Some members also observed that WFP must continue its work on transformative action in support of women and its programmes for preventing sexual and other forms of harassment as part of its adaptation to change.
19. Board members also recommended that WFP continue to promote a healthy work environment, given that such an environment was a driver of good performance. Some members also suggested that WFP should “tell its story” by seeking greater publicity for its achievements in areas such as supporting women and girls in establishing themselves in local economies and in promoting gender parity in the United Nations.
20. Some members drew attention to the record number of 125 million people needing humanitarian support, saying that there was a need for coordinated collective action to gather more accurate real-time data on needs, to increase accountability to beneficiaries and to maximize the use of CBTs as the most cost-effective form of assistance. They said that resilience and sustainable development were the overall aims and that proposals for new international agricultural development approaches involving the sharing of resources, skills and experiences should be considered.

21. The Executive Director expressed appreciation for Board members' supportive observations and their acknowledgement of the courage and professionalism of the staff in difficult circumstances. He undertook to consider the Board's remarks in depth and would respond in detail as occasion arose.

Annual reports

2019/EB.A/2 Annual performance report for 2018 *(for approval)*

22. Management introduced the document, saying that it took into account comments by member states during bilateral meetings and informal consultations, and presented a short video highlighting WFP achievements. As the report covered the first year in which all WFP programmes were aligned with the revised Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021), the data it contained would provide a baseline for future reporting.
23. Board members commended WFP's work with other United Nations agencies as outstanding, especially in emergency responses. The system for declaring Level 2 and 3 corporate emergencies helped to ensure that WFP had the necessary resources to respond and increased awareness of specific crises beyond WFP and its partners. Applauding the increased use of CBTs, members encouraged management to further increase their use. Members also expressed appreciation for WFP's commitment to fostering and using innovations; its engagement in the reform of the United Nations development system; and its development of exit plans that facilitated national ownership of programmes. Exit and handover strategies should be included in all CSPs.
24. Among the report's findings was that WFP performed well in gender-responsive programme management and the disaggregation of data by sex and age but less satisfactorily in ensuring the equal representation of women on its staff. Likewise, a strong, multidisciplinary approach to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, including the appointment of the Ethics Office as the focal point for efforts in this area, did not yield satisfactory results, as demonstrated by findings from the most recent global staff survey. Members urged management to consider harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination as risks not only to WFP's reputation but also its ability to achieve results. Actions for mitigating those risks should be included in future annual performance reports.
25. In turn, members requested that future reports also include more information on collaboration between the Rome-based agencies; local procurement from smallholder farmers; and WFP's roles in collective humanitarian responses, humanitarian clusters and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS).
26. Members highlighted WFP's increasing efforts to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and encouraged management to continue to work with bilateral and international partners on increasing support for school feeding, smallholder farming and the improvement of local infrastructure. Members also said that increased development work in middle-income countries would help to reduce the need for humanitarian responses in the future.
27. Concerned about the accuracy of some of the data used in the report, members urged management to commit to improving the quality, protection and privacy of data generated by WFP and its partners. There was also a need for clearer links between output data and high-level outcomes in the corporate results framework.
28. To address funding shortfalls and WFP's overdependence on its top ten donors members encouraged management to focus on broadening the funding base.
29. Management undertook to continue to strengthen mechanisms for ensuring accountability to affected populations and indicators for measuring progress in the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination – findings from the 2020 global staff survey would help identify trends in this area. Automated monitoring

systems and standardized reporting would improve the timeliness and quality of data used in WFP reports. To broaden the funding base, it was reported, WFP was seeking more contributions from the private sector, which currently accounted for only 1.6 percent of total funds raised. In addition to the direct purchases reported in the document, WFP also procured food from smallholder farmers via local traders and larger companies.

2019/EB.A/3 Annual report of the Ethics Office for 2018 *(for consideration)*

30. The Director of the Ethics Office outlined the office's mandate, structure, areas of work and relations with the Ethics Panel of the United Nations, noting significant increases in the number of recorded activities at WFP in 2018. Unrecorded activities included confidential consultations by and with the Director of the Ethics Office. The increase in advice and guidance work was largely driven by the #MeToo movement, wider discussion of sexual exploitation and abuse and activities involving various divisions in WFP, including those represented on the inter-divisional standing committee. She drew attention to the expansion of the annual conflict of interest and financial disclosure programmes resulting from an increase in the number of employees, decentralization and use of a questionnaire to identify conflicts of interest at the country level. In line with recommendations made by the External Auditor, the Ethics Office had recommended that this work be brought in-house to be carried out with internal resources and without the use of external consultants. Work with the Human Resources Division was ongoing, with a view to establishing a process for disclosing conflicts of interest disclosure prior to the appointment of new staff. Education and outreach activities continued, and capacity building for regional and country directors was a focus. Future tasks included finding ways to obtain more empirical data, improve field-level outreach, update the Ethics Office website and seek more financial and human resources.
31. Board members welcomed the report and urged the Ethics Office to finalize and implement the updated policy on protection against retaliation as soon as practicable. Members asked whether the Ethics Office would be sufficiently staffed to deal with increasing requests for support. Some members asked for information about the reasons for the low initial response rate to the annual conflict of interest and financial disclosure programme and suggested that consideration be given to imposing stricter sanctions for lack of compliance; questions were also raised with regard to progress on use of the United Nations ethical leadership programme in WFP. Board members expressed approval of the joint work of the Ethics Office and the Human Resources Division on the pre-appointment conflict of interest disclosure process and urged that relevant recommendations on whistleblower protection of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations be implemented promptly. There was also support for the recruitment of a consultant to work exclusively on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.
32. Board members drew attention to the negative responses to the questions on speaking out and internal communication in the most recent global staff survey, suggesting that they could reflect a fear of speaking out and urging the Ethics Office to support management in fostering the necessary behaviour changes. It was suggested that a review of the global staff survey questionnaire be undertaken to ensure that it focused on the most important issues, that it protected privacy and confidentiality and that issues raised were attended to promptly and, where possible, pre-emptively.
33. The Director of the Ethics Office expressed thanks for the support of the Board, saying that a fear of speaking out was natural in some cultural and social circumstances over which WFP could have no control. Overall, it was essential to ensure that WFP staff at all levels understood the importance of ethical matters to protecting the reputation of WFP and ensuring that its workplaces were characterized by respect and freedom from abusive conduct.

2019/EB.A/4 Annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services for 2018 and management response *(for consideration)*

34. The Ombudsman presented the annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services for 2018, which showed a rise in reports of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination (HSHAPD) to her office between 2017 and 2018. HSHAPD reports represented 33 percent of cases in 2018, and reports of sexual harassment had tripled from the previous year. She reported that fifty percent of visitors to the Ombudsman reported avoiding the need to make a formal complaint, which highlighted large potential cost savings to the organization. However, a lack of funding hampered the current reach of the Ombudsman's activities.
35. Management welcomed the report and its recommendations, which would contribute to efforts to foster a respectful workplace at WFP, alongside initiatives already under way such as the Respect Campaign and the introduction of two-way feedback for staff in supervisory roles.
36. Members praised the work of the Ombudsman and called on management to provide sufficient senior leadership support and resources to the office. They urged WFP to prioritize the fostering of a safe and respectful workplace culture, noting that according to the Global Staff Survey less than half of the workforce felt safe to speak up and challenge the processes in their office.
37. Members observed that the management response largely referred to existing policies, saying that they therefore failed to address the urgency of the need for cultural change and the importance of new approaches. They encouraged WFP to implement all recommendations fully, particularly those related to training.
38. For the next annual report, members requested the addition of a chapter analysing trends and issues and the inclusion of a table showing complaints year by year, broken down by category.
39. The Ombudsman thanked the Board members for their comments. She noted that the frequent use of short-term contracts was a factor contributing to a lack of willingness to speak up among employees. She also clarified that her recommendation that listening training be mandatory reflected the need for management to signal that change was under way throughout the organization.
40. The Director of Human Resources reaffirmed management's commitment to improving workplace culture. Numerous training materials were already available to improve the interpersonal skills of middle and upper management; while management agreed fully with the goal of the Ombudsman's recommendations on training, it questioned whether mandatory training for all was the best way to achieve it. Instead, they favoured a targeted approach.
41. He recognized that more support was needed to analyse trends and the impact of follow-up actions. WFP also needed a deeper understanding of the drivers of abusive conduct, which would hopefully be provided by the forthcoming external review.

Policy issues

2019/EB.A/5 Revised Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021) – Part II: 2021 targets for the programmatic outputs and performance indicators *(for approval)*

42. Management introduced the document, saying that it presented WFP's corporate targets for programmatic outputs and management key performance indicators, which had been defined in consultation with the members. Programme performance indicators had been selected to be representative of WFP's priority areas, resources allocated and breadth of work across all five strategic objectives. Corporate targets were based on historical data, trends and the needs-based planning figures set out in CSPs. Management key performance indicators reflected how WFP achieved its results and facilitated strategic discussions within WFP. All indicators had been developed in consultation with the responsible technical divisions, and targets would be adjusted each year to reflect changes.
43. Board members said that the development of the indicators and targets was an important step in enhancing WFP's accountability. They welcomed the commitment to disaggregating data by type of CBT and gender of beneficiary and looked forward to the development of an indicator on employee perceptions of WFP as a safe work environment, which would complement the new indicator on the presence of focal points for the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The indicator on the presence of functioning complaint and feedback mechanisms would help to measure performance in preventing and addressing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of beneficiaries, and members asked management to provide them with beneficiaries' feedback regarding the functioning of those mechanisms.
44. Members called for the expansion of school feeding programmes, which fostered socioeconomic development and ameliorated the negative impacts of poverty and crises. Worldwide, these programmes needed to reach an additional 73 million schoolchildren.
45. Members encouraged management to continue its efforts to develop outcome indicators.
46. Responding to points raised, management said that the 2020 global staff survey would provide an opportunity to identify trends in staff members' perceptions of WFP as a safe work environment. Management expected to make further progress in the development of outcome indicators during the following strategic planning period, when information on results generated from performance measurement and reporting under the current strategic plan would be available. The mid-term review of the current strategic plan would provide an opportunity to examine the feasibility of developing a theory of change to guide the design and implementation of the next strategic plan and the setting of related outcome targets. In expanding school feeding programmes, WFP's priority was to support nationally managed programmes in their efforts to feed more children. Where national capacities were limited, WFP implemented programmes itself, particularly those involving home-grown school feeding.

2019/EB.A/6 Update on the implementation of the 2018 Enterprise Risk Management Policy and WFP's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Action Plan (2018–2020) *(for consideration)*

47. Presenting an update on the implementation of the 2018 enterprise risk management policy and the WFP Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Action Plan for 2018–2020, management said that the new risk categorization was helping to enhance the quality, consistency and relevance of risk assessment throughout WFP. An updated corporate risk register would be presented to the Audit Committee in July 2019. Risk metrics for the corporate risk appetite report were being developed, with similar processes in place to support country and regional reporting. A new risk and recommendation tracking tool was being configured for adoption by country offices. During the last quarter of 2019, in preparation for the 2020

- annual performance planning process, staff would be trained in the enhanced risk management approach and the new system. In 2019, an increase in requests for risk and compliance advisors for complex operations had been observed.
48. Phase 1 of implementation of the anti-fraud and anti-corruption action plan had focused on gathering feedback and benchmarking; phase 2 would involve the enhancement of policies, guidance and tools for preventing fraud and corruption and the development of global expertise. These enhancements would be mainstreamed in phase 3.
 49. Board members welcomed the progress made in oversight and risk management throughout WFP and said they looked forward to seeing more uniform approaches to risk management and the prevention of fraud and corruption among country offices. Noting that all CSPs and CSP revisions presented in 2019 were fully aligned with the enterprise risk management policy, they expressed the hope that future CSP documents would provide more information on risk assessment and mitigation strategies. They encouraged management to continue to address weaknesses related to the clarity of WFP's mandate for zero hunger, staffing levels and the use of new technologies.
 50. Responding to questions related to staff and training, management advised of efforts to ensure consistency and standardization across WFP through regular outreach to risk and compliance advisors and focal points. Additional risk management training was foreseen for staff new to the function. Three additional risk and compliance advisors had been placed in country offices, in addition to the existing cadre of about 15 at the regional and country levels. Management also said that the use of the new risk tool for risk registers would be mandatory for all WFP offices from the end of November and that this would inform the further development of a central risk management portal. In response to a question on the mapping of risks identified in oversight reports on NGOs, it was explained that the NGO unit would take the lead on that, with guidance from the Enterprise Risk Management Division, if required.

2019/EB.A/7 Update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response
(for consideration)

51. Presenting the update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response, the Director of the WFP Geneva Office highlighted that while global humanitarian needs continued to grow, considerable funding gaps remained. The global humanitarian overview for 2020 would feature an increased focus on outputs and impact as well as highlighting overall needs.
52. In the context of United Nations development system reform, the need to preserve humanitarian access and uphold principles was underlined. Progress towards better addressing and harmonizing policies across organizations on the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of aid workers was noted. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) had recently adopted minimum standard guidelines on relations between United Nations staff members and beneficiaries.
53. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP had recently launched the *Global Report on Food Crises 2019* at an event hosted by the European Union, which featured discussion of innovative approaches to the prevention of food-related crises, especially through enhanced collaboration among United Nations agencies and donors. In January 2019 WFP had sponsored a workshop on starvation in international law with the University of Oxford and had subsequently contributed to a Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians.

54. She highlighted current partnerships with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), focusing on promoting self-reliance among refugees; with the World Health Organization (WHO), on the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All; and with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), on the enhancement of civil-military coordination capacities. WFP remained committed to the Centre for Competence on Humanitarian Negotiations, based in Geneva, with a view to supporting the strengthening of capacity to negotiate humanitarian access in complex settings.
55. Board members expressed appreciation for WFP's cooperation with its partners in providing emergency humanitarian assistance, building community resilience, addressing sexual and other forms of harassment and abuse and enhancing the capacities of governments and partners, noting that its cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR and OCHA had facilitated the development of a roadmap towards common cash-based systems and enhanced data sharing. Board members welcomed WFP's continued cooperation with the other Rome-based agencies to promote the Global Compact on Refugees and with the International Organization for Migration and were pleased to note WFP's increasing contributions to the pool of humanitarian coordinators. Board members requested more information on WFP's work with UNICEF on combined nutrition programming, particularly for refugees. Some members praised the work of UNHAS in delivering timely humanitarian consignments and UNHCR. They also recalled the aim of reducing earmarked contributions to 30 percent of total financial contributions and maximizing flexible multilateral funding by 2020.
56. Board members said they were pleased that WFP was increasing investment in emergency preparedness, early warning and early action in its operations, observing that anticipatory humanitarian assistance saved lives; major donors were already supporting a shift from emergency response to a forward-looking system that took cross-cutting issues such as climate change and gender equality into account. Some members said that the maintenance of safe humanitarian access was a fundamental requirement in any scenario.
57. The Director of the Geneva Office thanked the Board members for their remarks, observing that work was under way with several organizations to develop an anticipatory funding system to support early action and crisis prevention to reduce humanitarian needs. On protection, sexual abuse and harassment, she assured the Board that WFP had endorsed all current inter-agency principles and guidance. The Deputy Executive Director noted that WFP was committed to providing field-level coordinators on the issue within the offices of resident coordinators in several key operations. With regard to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, WFP was working with the IASC results group to develop good practices in joint analysis and programming for collective outcomes.
58. The Assistant Executive Director, Operations Services Department, undertook to keep the Board informed about WFP's engagement with the famine action mechanism, the global network against food crises and work with UNICEF on nutrition programming and resilience. She drew attention to WFP leadership with regard to efforts to engender greater preparedness and early action. She assured the Board that WFP had the required capacities and tools for emergency and other responses, but observed that these would need to be adapted as situations evolved. An essential factor in this would be to ensure that all partners were involved and not to overlook local organizations as potential partners.

Update on the gender policy (2015–2020) (for information)

59. The Director of the Gender Office presented the fourth update on the implementation of WFP's Gender Policy (2015–2020). The results of a forthcoming evaluation of the policy would be presented to the Board in 2020.
60. WFP was making good progress in implementing the policy action plan, although challenges remained in securing good quality data and achieving gender parity and sufficient funding. In terms of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for Implementation of the Chief Executives' Board System-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), WFP was performing well on 13 performance indicators and approaching or not doing well on three: financial resource allocation, tracking and gender architecture.
61. The gender transformation programme, key to achieving change on the ground, was well under way, rewarding country offices that had mainstreamed gender in all their processes, from programming to non-programming.
62. In a joint statement, 23 members expressed support for WFP's work on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. They welcomed improvements in relation to UN-SWAP but urged WFP to increase spending on gender issues and to improve the monitoring of financial resources.
63. Members underscored the vital role of gender equality in achieving zero hunger, calling for WFP to seek out new opportunities to work with local organizations and women's movements and to ensure their involvement throughout the programme cycle.
64. They looked forward to the results of the gender policy evaluation, particularly regarding the implementation of gender-transformative approaches in programmes. The work of the Gender Office should extend to all aspects of WFP such as communications, human resources and emergency response, not only programming. They urged WFP to ensure that the Gender Office had adequate resources to fulfil its role.
65. Turning to the issue of gender-based violence, members highlighted the importance of mainstreaming prevention and response in WFP programmes and the need for better coordination among various initiatives.
66. Although WFP exercised strong leadership on gender issues, members said that there was a lack of direction and accountability in the broader humanitarian system. They sought more information on how gender protection was being mainstreamed at WFP and how much funding reached the gender-based violence sub-cluster and women's rights organizations.
67. The Director of the Gender Office welcomed the comments, saying that discussions were under way on how to obtain more resources. She said that it would be difficult to track how much funding the sub-cluster received and how much reached women's rights organizations because there was no mechanism for doing so.
68. The Assistant Executive Director addressed the issue of engaging more women in resilience-building activities. In 2018 48 percent of food for assets participants and 67 percent of food for training participants were women. Those two activities had strengthened assets and empowered women. WFP was collaborating with the other Rome-based agencies on projects aimed at women. Additional donor support for asset creation programmes aimed at women would enable WFP to achieve even more.

2019/EB.A/8 Update on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 (repositioning the United Nations development system)
(for information)

Oral report on the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP

69. The Deputy Executive Director reiterated WFP's firm commitment to United Nations development system reform and to a whole-of-WFP approach to making the related internal changes required. United Nations system-wide discussions were internally coordinated by the WFP New York office and the senior task team on reform, while specific issues such as common premises and common business practices had been channelled through the business innovations group and the functional leads. Funding for the resident coordinator system was coming in, including USD 30–40 million through the 1 percent levy on development activities, but was still USD 90 million short of the target. The management and accountability framework was being put in place and tested at the country level, and work continued on the funding compact and on the United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks that were to replace United Nations development assistance frameworks. Still to come was work on regional coordination and regional accountability frameworks, in which regional economic commissions seemed poised to play a significant role and in which WFP would argue for maximum practicality and flexibility.
70. He suggested that the efficiency gains and savings generated by reform might even be sufficient to fund the resident coordinator system but cautioned that achieving such gains would require significant initial investment. Recalling that the underlying aim of reform was to make the United Nations more effective in supporting countries in their efforts to achieve zero hunger, he said that such savings should be spent on programmes rather than further coordination efforts. WFP hoped that reform would result in United Nations agencies being better able to help countries achieve zero hunger, and to that end it was important that post-reform operations be undertaken in a way that took into account the need to work with governments, NGOs and other partners who were accustomed to working with the existing United Nations development system.
71. Board members welcomed WFP's leadership in the reform process, in particular the participation of the Executive Director, and said that they looked forward to regular updates on developments. WFP's work with the New York-based agencies was praised. Board members expressed concern that some proposals on the country-level accountability of resident coordinators went beyond the provisions of resolution 72/279 and recommended that WFP find ways to ensure that the responsibility and accountability of WFP in delivering assistance was not undermined. Members commended WFP's participation in the development of the new cooperation framework and called for clarification of the emerging relationship between WFP country teams and the resident coordinator system. It was recommended that WFP engage fully with the Board to forestall challenges with regard to issues such as shared premises, where little progress had been made to date. Several members commended the inclusion of human rights and gender equality as cross-cutting elements of the reforms. Others stressed the need to ensure adequate funding and to make full use of the funding modalities set out in resolution 72/279, with one suggesting that reforming systems would mean little in the absence of sufficient funding. Some members recommended that reform of the resident coordinator system be carried out in consultation with WFP country teams to ensure optimum outcomes, and there were calls for clarification of the proposed funding options, including the 1 percent levy. Board members recommended that special accountability mechanisms be established to ensure that resident coordinators and national and United Nations bodies worked in harmony.

72. Management reassured the Board that current funding systems would continue to operate and that WFP's budget for cost sharing under the reform process would remain at USD 2.9 million annually. WFP was working with other agencies on a plan for 50 percent common premises, with a view to making shared premises the norm; challenges to this included a need for significant initial investment, including to defray the cost of breaking lease agreements, which would be necessary if common premises were to be occupied by 2021. Risk management with regard to United Nations reform was already included in WFP's risk register.
73. In response to a query on the common chapter included in the strategic plans of the New York-based agencies, management recalled that following consultation with the Board a decision had been made not to proceed with adding a common chapter to the current WFP Strategic Plan, which had been approved prior to the adoption of the strategic plans of the other United Nations humanitarian and development system agencies. The possibility of such a chapter could be revisited, however, in the context of a mid-term review of WFP's current strategic plan. It was also noted that guidance on alignment with the new cooperation framework had been shared with country offices, and future support mechanisms on the subject were being developed.

Oral update on the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP

74. Following the discussion of United Nations development system reform the President gave an overview of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/ the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and WFP that had taken place in New York on 31 May, which he had chaired. As lead agency, WFP had organized the meeting, with excellent support from the Executive Board Secretariat. Participants had included the WFP Executive Director and the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General.
75. In his opening remarks at the meeting, the President had encouraged all participants to focus on ways to improve how the funds and programmes served their beneficiaries, suggesting that all reform efforts should work towards this one objective. In her address, the Deputy Secretary-General had said that progress had been made in implementing the Secretary-General's reforms. The WFP Executive Director had underscored the importance of using clear, jargon-free language when communicating about the aims and achievements of the agencies.
76. Three topics had been discussed at the joint meeting: the working methods of the Executive Boards; efforts to tackle sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse; and United Nations reform and innovative financing.
77. Discussion of the first topic had focused on the findings of the core group of Member States on working methods of the Executive Boards, which had described those methods on which there was "convergence" and those on which there was not. A separate draft decision on the areas of convergence would be presented to each Executive Board for adoption at its next regular session in 2019; the areas of non-convergence would be revisited.
78. On behalf of the WFP Executive Board the Board President had delivered a statement elaborated in conjunction with the Bureau setting out WFP's position on the drive to harmonize the working methods of the four Executive Boards. The statement emphasized that due to its mandate, location and coordination with the other Rome-based agencies, many of the proposed reforms were of little relevance to WFP. While WFP fully supported United Nations reform, it did not agree with a "one size fits all" approach to working methods.

79. UN-Women had led discussion of the second topic, in which issues such as power inequalities, diplomatic immunity and policy harmonization came to the fore. There had been constructive discussion of the challenges faced by agencies when investigating reports of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, including long processing times and limited access to expert investigators.
80. The discussion of United Nations reform and innovative financing had been led by UNDP. Many interesting ideas had been explored, from Islamic financing models to private sector partnerships. It was clear that new solutions were needed to guarantee the funding of United Nations agencies in the future.
81. Following the joint meeting the WFP Executive Board Bureau had drafted a decision, to be taken into account in the decision on working methods to be considered by the Board, to ensure that WFP's particular circumstances were adequately reflected in the decision as adopted.
82. Following the President's presentation the Board approved the draft decision text without amendment.

Resource, financial and budgetary matters

2019/EB.A/9 Audited annual accounts for 2018 *(for approval)*

83. In its overview of WFP's financial position, management noted that total revenue had increased to a record USD 7.4 billion in 2018, that total expenses in 2018 amounted to USD 6.6 billion and that the surplus of revenue over expenses stood at USD 729 million. The surplus had arisen as a result of the time lag between recognition of revenue and recognition of expenditure and the difficult circumstances characterizing the Level 3 responses in the Syrian Arab Republic and surrounding region and in Yemen. In the aggregate the other country offices had registered a net deficit. The main source of revenue was monetary contributions, particularly for the Syrian and Yemen operations; the reduction in "Other Revenue" was largely a result of foreign exchange fluctuations. The volume of CBTs had risen to USD 1.8 billion, with CBT costs representing 75 percent of the increase in 2018 expenses, whereas the cost of food distributed had fallen slightly to USD 2.1 billion. Employee costs had risen by 11 percent to USD 980 million as a result of staffing increases.
84. WFP's total assets amounted to USD 8.2 billion, whereas total liabilities had declined to USD 2.9 billion; liability for employee benefits had decreased by 11 percent.
85. Total actual expenditures on a commitment basis (as set out in statement V of the comparison of budgeted and actual amounts for the year ended 31 December 2018) amounted to USD 6.8 billion, with a final budget utilization rate of 68 percent. Actual expenditures had exceeded those stated in the implementation plan because revenues had been higher than anticipated. Significant risk and internal control matters included the need to improve the management of NGO partners to minimize the risk of fraud, to which WFP was particularly exposed; other areas for improvement included beneficiary management, information technology controls and cybersecurity, scale-up and emergency response capacity, operational monitoring and workforce planning.
86. The External Auditor noted that the financial statements had earned an unqualified audit opinion and that the excess of revenues over expenditures had left WFP in a surplus position, although identified needs were greater than income. This was the result of a delay between the receipt of contributions and their recognition in the accounts, primarily with regard to WFP's responses to the Yemen and Syrian crises, as well as the difficult circumstances in which WFP's large operations were carried out.

87. Board members said that the increase in revenue reflected success in WFP's advocacy and fundraising activities but noted with concern that only 1 percent of revenue had come from private sector sources, recommending that WFP seek to increase that proportion as a matter of urgency. Some members expressed concern at the surplus of revenue over expenditure and strongly recommended that WFP ensure that its income was allocated in full, particularly to operations with significant funding gaps where feasible. Board members reiterated their concern regarding the proportion of earmarked funding, which restricted WFP's agility in responding to needs, and urged WFP to seek significantly more flexible multi-year funding as it sought to broaden its donor base. Board members recommended that WFP address the internal control issues identified in relation to NGO and beneficiary management and that it implement audit recommendations as a priority.
88. Some Board members expressed concern that WFP's increasing caseload could be unsustainable and urged WFP to revise its partnership agreements and build capacities to ensure the long-term continuity of its operations. Review of beneficiary management systems was needed to minimize fraud risks, and it was recommended that WFP provide guidance on undertaking systemic verification exercises. Some members recommended that the current monitoring and review system also be revisited.
89. Management reassured the Board that surplus funds were available for future expenditure, noting that the best way forward was to increase the proportion of multi-year unearmarked funding in combination with the use of WFP's internal lending systems. The Board was also reassured that the internal control issues relating to NGO management, beneficiary data and monitoring and verification of beneficiaries would be more effectively addressed as WFP's new organizational structure became established.

2019/EB.A/10 Update on the WFP Management Plan (2019–2021) (for approval)

90. Management introduced the update on the management plan for 2019–2021, saying that it outlined a proposed realignment of the organizational structure at WFP headquarters aimed at balancing the work of the leadership team and thus enabling it to support field offices more effectively. The proposed restructuring would have no effect on WFP's budget or headcount in 2019.
91. Members welcomed the Executive Director's decision to submit the proposed restructuring for the Board's approval after presenting it for scrutiny by the FAO Finance Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). They commended members of the senior management team for their engagement with the Board in informal consultations aimed at addressing concerns raised by some members regarding the rationale for the proposed changes. Members emphasized that such consultations were necessary to enable Board members to exercise their oversight role in a meaningful manner. The document would provide a valuable reference for future reviews of WFP's management structure.
92. Endorsing the new organizational structure, members asked management to provide periodic updates on its effect on WFP's ability to deliver planned outcomes, on employees' perceptions of WFP as a safe working environment and on WFP's ability to prevent and address cases of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination. They also requested timely notice of any organizational changes considered by management in the future. Members underlined the importance of avoiding overlaps in responsibilities among the five pillars of the new structure.
93. Some members suggested that the number of high-level staff in the WFP Brussels office be increased given the level of contributions received from European countries and the European Union.

94. Management provided additional information requested by Board members. The Special Advisor for the Sahel was not shown in the tables in the annexes to the document because the position was not funded from the programme support and administrative budget. Recommendations by the ACABQ included that revised documents be presented in "track changes" mode and that the replacement of a staff post with another more than one grade higher be referred to as the abolition of one post and the creation of another rather than as an upgrade of the lower post. Management was committed to engaging with the Board on any future changes to the organizational structure.

2019/EB.A/11 Annual report of the Audit Committee *(for consideration)*

95. Presenting the annual report of the Audit Committee, its Chair said that WFP should review its enterprise risk management processes and clearly establish its risk appetite. It should increase the robustness of its internal controls, one element of which was to enhance its information technology systems. The Office of the Inspector General had the appropriate skills for internal audits, and the additional resources received enabled it to extend its work to focus on small country offices previously not covered. WFP had a financial surplus largely due to unspent funds for L3 operations in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen but its internal accounts nonetheless met the requirements of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.
96. A performance audit of anti-fraud processes by the External Auditor had revealed that the level of reported fraud was not significant. WFP's statement of internal control was satisfactory, but management should give greater attention to preventing harassment and addressing reported cases promptly and fairly. Increased training and communications to staff and additional resources were required to enable the Office of the Inspector General to continue to investigate and address the growing volume of new cases. Improved data management was needed to ensure that decision making was robust and effective. WFP should expedite the digitization process, which would bring strategic benefits in terms of improved data management, information and decision making.
97. Board members expressed appreciation for the work of the Audit Committee, confirming that WFP was in a position to honour all its commitments. Board members expressed satisfaction that WFP was working as recommended by the committee to improve its internal controls, to use its current surplus effectively and to roll out new information technology solutions. Board members noted the committee's proposal to revisit the question of the delegation of powers and proposed a general statement of internal control to raise WFP's level of assurance. Several members expressed approval of WFP's work in combatting harassment, including in particular the role of the Executive Director, and minimizing fraud and corruption. Board members supported the recommendation that all country and regional offices maintain accurate and up-to-date risk registers and be even more vigilant with regard to risks of fraud in relation to partners.
98. Board members urged management to address the concern raised by the committee regarding fraud in relation to CSPs and CBTs, as well as the associated reputational risks, observing that more trained and experienced staff and more purposeful workforce planning would go some way to addressing the issue. Some Board members expressed concern that the same issues were arising in consecutive Audit Committee reports, urging management to be resolute in enhancing its internal control mechanisms and enforcing them promptly, particularly in relation to the non-reporting of fraud. Members asked the committee for its estimation of the likelihood that the same risks would recur in future reports.
99. The Chairman of the Audit Committee thanked the Board for its observations and undertook to continue its support for improved internal controls, noting that it had made a number of recommendations with regard to vendor management for immediate implementation by management. He observed that outstanding issues related to the implementation of

IT systems in progress might well appear in more than one committee report if the time required to address them spanned more than one committee meeting.

100. Management noted that the Audit Committee report complemented those of the Inspector General and the External Auditor in its attention to the issue of managing partner NGOs and assured the Board that it was taking appropriate action. WFP's work on improved analysis, digitization of beneficiary data and systems integration would facilitate the introduction of long-term improvements that would help to mitigate the risk of financial surpluses. Management agreed with the committee recommendations on risk registers and WFP's risk appetite, reporting that measures to improve in these areas, including better risk management norms and terms of compliance and a final risk register, were already being implemented. With regard to accountability to beneficiaries and partners, management emphasized that these were not options, and it undertook to raise awareness among managers to ensure that compliance was not simply a matter of ticking boxes. Management acknowledged the increase in high-risk audit issues from 34 in 2017 to 44 in 2018 and to 76 in May 2019, and it undertook to reduce outstanding issues as rapidly as possible.

2019/EB.A/12 Annual report of the Inspector General and note by the Executive Director
(for consideration)

101. The Inspector General, the Director of Internal Audit and the Chief Investigations Officer presented the report of the Inspector General's office. No material weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes that would compromise WFP's ability to achieve its objectives had been identified in the work performed. The Inspector General had carried out 27 assignments in 2018, of which 20 were internal audits comprising 11 field operation audits, six thematic and process audits and three information technology audits. The internal audit division had also completed five fraud-focused proactive integrity reviews and two management advisories. Most audits had resulted in "partially satisfactory" ratings; with three "unsatisfactory" ratings applied to aspects of asset management and operations in Liberia and Libya, which would be followed up through future audits. Issues had been identified in respect of WFP's capacities and resources, risk management, internal controls, monitoring systems, streamlining of processes through automation and integration of systems and management and oversight of partner NGOs. Oversight activities had indicated areas for improvement in the management of assets and vendors and in the coherence of CBT-related control mechanisms. The roll-out of SCOPE was slower than expected, and the Office of the Inspector General would be investigating beneficiary targeting and data protection in 2019. The length of time needed for WFP to address certain internal audit recommendations was significant, yet the backlog had been reduced. Independent assessments had shown that the Office of the Inspector General had the skills and processes to perform its internal audit and investigative responsibilities in accordance with professional standards. The focus of investigations had been on fraud and corruption in 63 percent of cases, abuse of power in 14 percent, sexual harassment in 11 percent and sexual exploitation and abuse in 8 percent. The remaining cases dealt with issues related to recruitment and undisclosed conflicts of interest.
102. Staff numbers had recovered from their 2015 low, enabling the office to conduct proactive integrity reviews and focus more on the detection of fraud among NGO partners. The ratio of women to men among staff members had reached parity. The office's budget had recently been increased by USD 3.9 million through 2020, but the office would need additional investigators to address the growing number of hotline complaints and investigations.

103. Management reported that the note by the Executive Director gave details of follow-up actions in response to the report of the Oversight Office – also included in his statement on internal control – covering the recommendations to improve the management of NGO partners, enhance operational monitoring, upgrade internal communications technology, increase emergency-support capabilities and develop the SCOPE system. Management also drew attention to potential challenges in terms of management's capacity to implement the recommendations in a timely manner, owing to the complexity of some of the actions required to do so.
104. Board members welcomed the Inspector General's favourable opinion and accepted that additional resources were needed to fund future activities. Board members urged management to ensure that risk registers were properly used: risk mitigation and management should be priorities at all levels, and Board members said they were pleased to know that more resources were being allocated to NGO management. Members also called for improved implementation of internal controls and checks on partners and vendors and asked what steps were being taken to ensure that capacities for critical organizational functions at the field level were fully resourced. Board members recommended that management ensure that staff capacities were adequate to handle the complexity of CSPs and that regular capacity building be prioritized in country offices where staff were frequently rotated. Concern was expressed with regard to weaknesses identified in operational monitoring, and members said that they looked forward to the closure of high-risk audit recommendations in the near future. Board members expressed disquiet with regard to audit findings of restricted humanitarian access and asked what was being done to address the problem. Some members recommended that enhanced checks be developed for CBT-based operations to prevent fraud and protect WFP's reputation. Some asked whether human and financial resources for the Inspector General's office were adequate and encouraged management to ensure that they were, while one member asked about the number of staff in comparison to the Office of Evaluation. Members also wondered why audit ratings were at best only "satisfactory".
105. The Inspector General and Director of the Oversight Office responded to the question about the distribution of internal audit ratings, noting that ratings could distort perceptions of the state of the control environment because internal audits were risk-based and focused on problem areas and in some cases on immature activities, resulting in "partially-satisfactory" versus "satisfactory" ratings.
106. The Inspector General's office was likely to require further staffing increases in the area of investigations because complaint reporting had doubled in 2018 and continued to grow. Future staffing increases for the office had been requested in order to give WFP employees and stakeholders confidence that complaints would be handled promptly and appropriately. For staffing comparisons with the Office of Evaluation, it was noted that the Office of Evaluation used a different staffing model than did the Office of the Inspector General and utilised more contract staff that did not appear in the staffing comparisons.
107. In responding to additional questions from members, management said that issues with the management of vendors and NGO partners were expected to be addressed in line with the recommendations of the Inspector General and the External Auditor. SCOPE coverage in 54 countries had increased from 15 million to 37 million beneficiaries in a relatively short time, and the system required more staff and funding, particularly because complex issues such as data protection and cyber security had to be taken into account as processes were developed.

2019/EB.A/13 Report of the External Auditor on country portfolio budgets and WFP management response to the recommendations (for consideration)

108. Presenting his report on country portfolio budgets, the External Auditor's report said that the implementation of the Integrated Road Map had improved WFP's capacity to report on its activities and to align its operations with those of other United Nations agencies. The report made 11 recommendations, including that WFP work with Member States to define the optimal level of information required by the Board to perform its oversight and governance functions.
109. Management agreed with all the recommendations, and in response to the two highest priority recommendations WFP would clarify how it defined needs, review how implementation capacity was estimated and present in the management plan for 2020–2022 a consolidated country portfolio budget disaggregated by the four high-level cost categories of transfer costs, implementation costs, direct support costs and indirect support costs.
110. Members welcomed the report and the positive response of WFP management to its findings and recommendations. They agreed that it was necessary to assess the level of information provided for governance and detailed information for funding decisions as well as balance the requirement for transparency with the administrative burden on country offices. They also praised WFP's commitment to reporting annually on the value of food or food equivalents received by beneficiaries and to publishing a consolidated country portfolio budget.
111. Several members urged WFP to continue to improve its reporting and monitoring, such as by improving the CSP data portal and by providing timely updates on the utilization of resources compared with the needs-based budgets. Some members called for WFP to take the implementing capacity of country offices into account with regard to CSPs.
112. Board members expressed appreciation for the recommendations on defining needs and on establishing the level of information needed by the Executive Board. Some members suggested that WFP monitor fees paid to cooperating partners and field-level agreement rates. Others asked whether the corporate results framework indicators might be too numerous or too detailed.
113. Management noted the ongoing efforts to align CSP cycles with United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks and encouraged members to share feedback on the CSP data portal, which was continuing to evolve. From July 2019, the portal would provide information on the amount of food and cash-based transfers received by beneficiaries, as well as 2018 expenditure data. The portal would make it easier for donors to track how their contributions were spent, and WFP hoped that increased transparency would encourage donors to provide contributions at a higher level in the results chain.
114. The corporate results framework currently included over 50 output indicators, and management was committed to setting outcome targets over the next three years. During the fourth quarter of 2019 management hoped to provide the 2020 implementation plan targets for comparison with needs-based planning targets.

2019/EB.A/14 Report of the External Auditor on fraud prevention, detection and response and WFP management response to the recommendations (for consideration)

115. The External Auditor presented the report on the audit of fraud prevention, detection and response, which had sought to identify the root causes of possible underreporting of fraud at WFP by examining its fraud management cycle. The audit had resulted in 13 recommendations, prioritizing fraud prevention and including measures to improve risk assessment, encourage the reporting of presumptive cases of fraud through organizational channels and standardizing the treatment of fraud in risk registers.

116. Management welcomed the audit and had already implemented two of the recommendations. A further eight would be implemented by June 2020. Management was preparing anti-fraud and anti-corruption (AFAC) guidance tools to enhance fraud risk assessment, reporting and risk management, due-diligence and management of conflicts of interest while raising awareness among cooperating partners of their contractual obligation to report suspicions of fraud, assess fraud risk and establish fraud reporting mechanisms.
117. Board members acknowledged that WFP's higher exposure to fraud risk resulted from the nature of its activities while noting several concerns regarding matters raised in the report, including the possible underreporting of fraud and the culture of accountability within the organization. They urged WFP to create a culture that enabled the systematic reporting of suspected fraud and to update the AFAC policy as needed.
118. Some members highlighted the importance of training, noting that the report cited a completion rate of 61 percent for mandatory AFAC training, which management noted was currently 83 percent. Others emphasized the need for United Nations agencies to adopt a common approach to fraud, particularly in vulnerable countries.
119. Several members called on WFP to strengthen internal controls, its risk register, letters of representation and the declaration of assurance at all levels of the organization.
120. Management clarified that the 2015 AFAC policy applied to all projects funded by WFP and all projects implemented by WFP and any government agency or cooperating partner. It was incumbent upon all, not only WFP, to apply the standards set out in the policy, but management recognized that it was challenging to induce NGO partners and vendors to report their own suspicions of fraud, noting that sensitization of partners was part of management action to enhance fraud risk management.
121. At the request of the Audit Committee, the Office of the Inspector General was examining the assurance process and how it could be strengthened. Management also recognized that it was necessary to foster a culture of accountability.
122. WFP hoped to publish a revised AFAC policy tentatively towards the end of 2020. A reporting tool for recording incidents, including fraud, was being rolled out. By the end of the year, WFP would also have country risk registers in an online system, which would facilitate quality assurance reviews.

2019/EB.A/15 Report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations
(for consideration)

123. Management presented the report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations, noting that management had followed up on 56 recommendations that had been outstanding at the time of the 2018 annual session of the Board. Of those, action had been completed in response to 29, representing 52 percent of the total. The report described the plans to address the remaining recommendations, with associated implementation dates.
124. A number of recommendations implemented in the previous 12 months were highlighted, including several deriving from audits on the management of corporate emergencies, the scale-up and scale-down of resources in emergency situations, WFP's school feeding operations, changes in human resources, decentralization and food-related losses.
125. Management expressed appreciation for the constructive work of the External Auditor in providing critical feedback to management and assurance to Member States.
126. It was noted that the External Auditor had issued 29 new recommendations in 2019: five on the 2018 audited annual accounts and 24 deriving from the two performance audits on country portfolio budgets and fraud prevention, detection and response.

2019/EB.A/16 Report on the utilization of WFP's advance financing mechanisms during the period 1 January–31 December 2018 (for approval)

127. Introducing the report on the utilization of WFP's advance financing mechanisms in 2018, management said that given the importance of the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) in enabling WFP to respond rapidly to emergencies, it was seeking the Board's approval for increasing the GCMF ceiling from USD 500 million to USD 560 million. The FAO Finance Committee and the ACABQ had endorsed the proposed increase.
128. Board members said that advance financing mechanisms played an important role in enabling WFP to work effectively, including by facilitating food procurement from smallholder farmers in host countries, expressing support for the proposed increase in the GCMF.
129. Some members requested that future reports include analysis and comparisons of the use of internal project lending, macro-advance financing and the immediate response account over the previous three years. Members reiterated concerns about the low levels of contributions to the immediate response account and emphasized the importance of flexible and predictable funding in enabling WFP to respond to crises effectively.
130. Responding to points raised, management said that the ability to carry out internal project lending depended on the level of forecast contributions within a country office. It therefore tended to increase when high levels of contributions were forecast. Only two defaults in repayments to the internal project lending facility had been reported, one in 2005 and another in 2018 relating to an allocation made in 2011. WFP's procurement policy was adhered to for all procurement through the GCMF, but it was noted that use of the USD 20 million of GCMF funding earmarked for procurement from smallholder farmers posed some additional risk because WFP used it to provide farmers with assured contracts prior to harvest so that they could procure inputs.
131. The balance of the immediate response account varied as a result of one-time transfers from the programme support and administrative equalization account. Direct contributions to the account stood at about USD 50 million a year.

Evaluation reports**2019/EB.A/17 Annual evaluation report for 2018 and management response (for consideration)**

132. The Director of the Office of Evaluation presented the annual evaluation report and the Director of the Performance Management and Monitoring Division presented the management response. The Board was informed that 15 centralized evaluations had been implemented in 2018 and that a new window for impact evaluations was being launched; a single new policy evaluation would begin before the end of 2019, along with two strategic evaluations. Also in 2019, the Office of Evaluation would shift to evaluations of CSPs, beginning with seven such evaluations. The office expected to complete the evaluation of the Level 3 operations in Nigeria in 2019; it was also planning two other WFP emergency response evaluations and would participate in two inter-agency humanitarian evaluations. The first impact evaluation window, on cash-based transfers and gender, was under way, to be followed by the preparation for the second window, on climate and resilience, in 2019. In 2018 the office had carried out a synthesis of eight WFP country portfolio evaluations, with plans for a synthesis of lessons from policy evaluations in 2019. There was evidence that demand for more decentralized evaluations had increased since 2017.
133. Among the developments in the evaluation function was an increased focus on human and financial resources and greater attention to multi-component key performance indicators; the quality of decentralized evaluations had clearly improved since 2016.

The Office of Evaluation was giving increased attention to forming evaluation partnerships with other humanitarian organizations, in alignment with United Nations development system reform and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With regard to expenditure on evaluation, WFP's target of 0.8 percent of contribution income was yet to be achieved, and expenditure in 2018 had been USD 13.7 million, or 0.19 percent of contribution income. An assessment of WFP's evaluation function and progress in the implementation of WFP's evaluation policy (2016–2021) had been reported by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network. WFP's key priorities for 2019 and beyond included adapting to the CSP evaluation model; ensuring systematic monitoring of follow-up to recommendations; developing and implementing an impact evaluation strategy; ensuring sustainable funding mechanisms for the evaluation function; building up a skilled WFP workforce in monitoring and evaluation and strengthening national evaluation capacity; continuing to respond to the implications of United Nations reform; and developing more evaluation partnerships.

134. Board members welcomed the report, noting the increase in the budget of the Office of Evaluation. It was suggested that a balanced package of evaluations be developed to ensure that all relevant issues were assessed and that greater attention be given to obtaining in-depth feedback from evaluation to programming through more systematic management of information. Board members observed that evaluations had tended to focus on school feeding and capacity building programmes in Asia and Africa and suggested that evaluations of operations in South America and the Caribbean were needed. Board members expressed appreciation for the Office of Evaluation's commitment to quality in all its work and the synergies created with the evaluation offices of partner organizations, suggesting that all lessons learned be shared with other humanitarian organizations.
135. The Director of the Office of Evaluation thanked the Board for its support and noted the progress made by the office in 2019 in relation to the restructuring and staffing plan, which involved moving from short-term and consultancy arrangements to an increased number of fixed-term positions, clarifying that further growth in the number of staff members would be required in 2020. She agreed that evaluations should cover all operational areas, resources permitting, and assured the Board that lessons learned were shared widely as a matter of course.

2019/EB.A/18 Summary report on the evaluation of the update of WFP's safety nets policy (2012) and management response *(for consideration)*

136. The Director of Evaluation presented the report on the evaluation of WFP's 2012 safety nets policy, which had found that WFP was a credible actor in respect of safety nets and social protection despite shortcomings in human resources, knowledge management and monitoring and reporting systems. While growing experience with social protection in country offices and regional bureaux provided a platform for the further development of WFP's approach, senior management's prioritization of WFP work in social protection was unclear and coordination throughout WFP was a challenge. Management agreed with all five recommendations set out in the evaluation report.
137. Board members welcomed WFP's growing engagement in safety nets and social protection, saying that they provided opportunities to increase WFP's role in development. The introduction of CSPs had increased the focus on safety nets and social protection throughout WFP.

138. Members recommended that the WFP social protection policy currently being developed focus on nationally led programmes and define the boundaries of WFP's work in social protection, along with a theory of change. WFP should pursue coherence between its social protection initiatives and its programmes in other areas, coordination among the various functions involved in social protection, and complementarity with the social protection operations of other United Nations agencies. Partnerships were essential in avoiding competition and fragmentation, increasing the benefits for beneficiaries and fostering nationally owned social protection systems.
139. Concerned that the evaluation had found little evidence that WFP's work in social protection contributed to gender-transformative outcomes, addressed the needs of persons with disabilities or enhanced accountability to affected populations, members emphasized the importance of using gender and age analysis to inform the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes; of disaggregating data by sex and age; of facilitating decision making by women and girls; and of introducing targets and indicators that measured progress towards gender-transformative outcomes.
140. In response to points raised, management said that adoption of the new United Nations sustainable development and cooperation framework would help to reduce competition for resources among social protection actors. WFP's comparative advantages in social protection lay in improving the food security and nutrition-sensitivity of social protection programmes, strengthening the shock-responsiveness of national social protection systems, and leveraging its experience in strengthening social protection delivery systems.

2019/EB.A/19 Synthesis report of WFP's country portfolio evaluations in Africa (2016–2018) and management response *(for consideration)*

141. The Director of Evaluation presented the first synthesis which assessed eight country portfolio evaluations across the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, adding to the body of evidence on WFP's work in complex situations. The country portfolios were appropriately aligned with national priorities and with United Nations development assistance frameworks and humanitarian response plans but exhibited limited gender sensitivity in design. Proactive approaches to protection had been adopted, yet attention to accountability to affected populations was not sufficient. Moreover, in volatile operating contexts, opportunities for sustainability were limited. The synthesis made six recommendations arising from the country portfolio evaluations and recent policy and strategic evaluations.
142. Management agreed with the recommendations and partially agreed with two sub-recommendations, explaining that WFP had already started to alter its guidance and programming in response to the report. Among its planned actions, WFP would improve guidance on CSP design, strengthen its financial and partnership base, give priority to staffing in hardship duty stations and increase attention to accountability to affected populations.
143. Board members praised the solid analysis and constructive lessons provided by the synthesis report. Members encouraged management to make all programming gender-transformative, to strengthen collaboration with other United Nations organizations and as far as feasible to implement exit and sustainability strategies as envisaged. Some members said that there was room to improve donor communications to raise awareness of operational needs and activities.
144. One member underscored the importance of continuity in recovery and transition activities to protect humanitarian and development gains during emergencies and praised the report's focus on resilience and sustainability, as well as its call for WFP to address data gaps and devise outcome-level indicators.

145. In relation to the staffing of hardship posts, one member asked whether management had any solutions to the problem beyond monetary incentives and sought clarification on the parameters that would be set regarding WFP's engagement in peacebuilding activities.
146. Management thanked the Board members for their comments, emphasizing WFP's commitment to taking a gender-transformative approach. WFP sought to continue recovery activities for as long as feasible, but in some cases the operating environment and funding constraints made it necessary to suspend them. The organization continued to address data gaps, although conflict-affected areas presented challenges to data collection.

2019/EB.A/20 Implementation status of evaluation recommendations *(for consideration)*

147. Management presented the tenth annual report on the implementation of actions taken by WFP offices in response to evaluation recommendations. The report covered recommendations issued between 2008 and 2018. Of the 1,551 recommended actions agreed to by management, 60 percent pertained to field offices and 40 percent to headquarters. Over the previous five years, management had implemented recommended actions at an average annual rate of 83.8 percent. In 2018 implementation rates averaged more than 81 percent, from 92 percent of actions in corporate emergency response evaluations to 37 percent in policy evaluations, reflecting the relative complexity of the actions arising from policy evaluations.
148. Enhancements in tracking and reporting on progress included twice-yearly follow-up from all offices. A new tool for tracking all oversight recommendations and management follow-up actions to be rolled out later in 2019 would facilitate enhanced qualitative and quantitative reporting.
149. Board members thanked management for a high-quality report and commended its responses to the recommendations.

Southern Africa portfolio

150. The Regional Director for Southern Africa reviewed the situation in the region, beginning with Mozambique, where devastation wrought by Cyclone Idai had affected up to 1.7 million people. She thanked the Board for its support in the wake of the cyclone, which had allowed WFP to bring in food and help establish call and data networks essential for relief operations.
151. Southern Africa was particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and erratic weather. Drought emergencies had been declared in Angola and Namibia in the first half of 2019, with other countries expected to follow suit. Southern Africa's food and nutrition security working group warned of alarming levels of food insecurity and malnutrition across the region, compounded by livestock losses, higher staple prices, fewer farming jobs and an earlier start of the lean season.
152. WFP was gravely concerned by the humanitarian emergency in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where over 13 million people had been identified as facing food insecurity. Access was hampered by growing insecurity, including attacks on aid workers. The number of Ebola cases in the east of the country had surpassed 2,000; efforts to contain the disease were constrained by poor access and widespread community mistrust.
153. Board members noted the urgency of mitigating the effects of climate change in the region, where agriculture was heavily dependent on rainfall. Some called for increased collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies to build resilience and to tackle the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One member requested more details on the obstacles impeding the containment of Ebola. Another sought to understand the impact of funding shortfalls on WFP's operations in the region.

154. The Regional Director noted that WFP was working closely with FAO to strengthen resilience to climate change through approaches such as crop diversification. WFP was also working with other United Nations agencies and the governments of the countries affected by the recent cyclones to ensure that damaged infrastructure was rebuilt to be much more resilient to extreme weather events.
155. She confirmed that instability was impeding efforts to contain Ebola and that some communities were resisting vaccination. The imminent elections and change of provincial government could bring positive change.
156. Regarding resources, WFP was called upon to provide different types of support to different countries in the region, from capacity building and technical assistance to critical operational support. The Deputy Executive Director added that in some cases the exit of WFP from a particular country was hindered by difficulties in finding partners able to take over programmes. WFP was exploring ways to bring in partners earlier to facilitate handover.

2019/EB.A/21 Country strategic plan – Lesotho (2019–2024) (for approval)

157. The Lesotho Country Director introduced the CSP for that country, through which WFP would move from direct programme implementation towards building national capacity and ownership. Informed by national development priorities, the CSP sought to contribute to a more resilient, food-secure and healthy Lesotho and to respond to challenges faced by the country such as limited job opportunities, poor agricultural performance, a high burden of malnutrition and high rates of HIV and AIDS.
158. Members welcomed the CSP, praising its emphasis on supporting livelihoods and sustainable food systems, building national capacity and working through partnership. They encouraged WFP to continue to seek ways to collaborate with partners in the public and private sectors, as well as government bodies at all levels. One member praised the one United Nations approach in Lesotho, which had proven particularly successful in strengthening resilience since the drought in 2017.
159. Several members said there was value in linking smallholder farmers to school feeding programmes in order to strengthen the resilience of communities. One member said that products purchased locally were not necessarily produced locally or by smallholder farmers; local procurement could even work to the detriment of local economies, and WFP should draw up a family farming procurement policy to set out its approach in this area more clearly, particularly given the launch of the decade of family farming.
160. The Country Director thanked the Board members for their support and comments. She agreed that the one United Nations approach had delivered excellent results, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. Regarding the ongoing drought, she would continue to share information on how it evolved and the efforts by the United Nations and the government to respond to it.

2019/EB.A/22 Country strategic plan – Madagascar (2019–2024) (for approval)

161. The Madagascar Country Director introduced the CSP through which WFP would shift the focus of its work in that country from crisis response to resilience building. Given the challenging conditions in the country, WFP envisaged a gradual handover of its activities to the Government.
162. Board members welcomed the CSP and its close alignment with national programmes and systems, particularly through WFP's use of national school feeding and social protection programmes to deliver food assistance. WFP's support for the Government's emergency response and social protection, including through capacity building for national institutions and the expansion of social protection programmes to reach vulnerable people in remote areas, would help strengthen resilience to crises throughout Madagascar. Members urged WFP to continue to collaborate with national, United Nations and other partners in order to

achieve planned outcomes and emphasized the importance of maintaining the capacity and flexibility needed to respond to emergencies when they occurred.

163. Noting that 2019 marked the start of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, Board members welcomed the home-grown school feeding approach and the use of produce from school gardens and local smallholders in school feeding, and they emphasized that food fortification should be only a temporary measure until local farmers were able to produce sufficient nutritious and diverse food. WFP would facilitate this by providing farmers with improved tools and techniques.
164. Responding to points raised, the Country Director said that WFP was rolling out its digital system for managing conditional on-demand assistance (SCOPE CODA) in partnership with UNICEF, which had experience in using similar tools in areas with limited connectivity. Nutrition activities carried out with UNICEF and other partners included providing the families of children attending nutrition centres with CBTs for the purchase of fresh, nutritious food.
165. CSP revisions during implementation would address any need to adjust activities in response to emergencies and clarify the line of sight from contributions to outcomes. In the meantime, WFP would clearly identify which contributions were allocated to which activities. The Regional Director added that the design of activities reflected the holistic approach of the CSP.

2019/EB.A/23 Country strategic plan – Zambia (2019–2024) (for approval)

166. The Zambia Country Director said that sustained economic growth in the country over the past decade had yet to translate into significant reductions in poverty and hunger. Staple food production routinely exceeded domestic requirements, yet the problem of food insecurity was primarily a matter of access to adequate nutritious food, as evidenced by high malnutrition rates.
167. WFP's country strategic plan, developed through intensive consultations and informed by a zero hunger strategic review, would continue to shift WFP's focus from direct implementation to policy and technical assistance in areas where WFP's expertise would maximize impact. The CSP provided for crisis-affected people through food and nutrition assistance, enabling them to meet their immediate needs. WFP would support government institutions responsible for nutrition programmes in scaling up actions promoting good nutrition and would engage the private sector through the SUN Business Network. For smallholder farmers vulnerable to shocks and with limited access to markets, WFP would strengthen their livelihoods and support their resilience to climate risks. Technical assistance would focus on strengthening national systems' capacity to sustainably deliver social protection more efficiently and at scale.
168. Board members noted with satisfaction the CSP's strategic focus and partnerships and the relevance of strategic objectives and emphasized the continuing need for South–South and triangular cooperation. Members expressed appreciation for WFP's pragmatic shift from unsustainable localized and micro-level interventions to advocacy for engagement with national policies, systems and programmes that could facilitate the country's achievement of SDG 2, as well as support for refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They called for WFP to address national capacity and funding limitations for the home-grown school feeding programme. On the availability of nutritious food, members expressed concern that fortification was only a provisional solution and said that there was a need to leverage FAO's technical expertise on crop diversification. Members said that responses to the challenges had been well conducted and comprehensive, including with regard to consultations with stakeholders and an emphasis on gender disparity. Members expressed satisfaction at the involvement of stakeholders in the preparation of the CSP on the basis of national priorities and frameworks, noting with satisfaction that it

aimed to address the causes of malnutrition, strengthen resilience and ensure access to small-scale producer markets, especially for women, while also supporting government initiatives to supply social protection systems.

169. The Country Director thanked the Board members for their comments. Noting the Government's investment and longstanding discussion on transitioning to full national ownership, she said that WFP was cognizant of the challenges and would work with the Government to make sure that the school feeding programme was guided by a national strategy and implemented with strengthened systems.
170. On diversification, the CSP had a strong smallholder support component that promoted the diversification of crops, especially nutrient-dense crops, as well as a nutrition awareness component, and sought to link smallholder farmers to markets by leveraging the private sector. Biofortification would be informed by a fortification policy supported by stakeholders, including WFP.

Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia portfolio

171. The Regional Director for the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia reported that the region faced rising food insecurity driven by multiple conflicts and widespread displacement. The number of people in need had increased by 4 million since 2018 and was currently five times higher than before the Arab Spring.
172. While the situation had improved in the Syrian Arab Republic, fighting continued to displace people in the northeast and in the absence of a political solution millions of Syrians remained unable to return home. Life for the population of Gaza was increasingly dire, with shortages of food, drinking water and electricity; underfunding meant WFP was able to assist fewer than half of the targeted beneficiaries.
173. Libya and the Sudan also presented major challenges. WFP had been present in Libya since the beginning of the crisis, providing food assistance to the vulnerable population as well as common services including UNHAS services to the humanitarian community. Over 8 million people needed humanitarian assistance in the Sudan. Amid the current crisis WFP had been forced to evacuate non-essential staff and family members, but over 1,000 staff remained in the country. WFP remained committed to delivering.
174. Despite the multiple crises, WFP continued to strive to support countries to achieve zero hunger by 2030, such as through capacity-building assistance to strengthen governments' social safety nets in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. Education was also a key intervention, as it not only addressed gender gaps and malnutrition but also contributed to eliminating extremism in the region. WFP had successful education programmes in the more stable circumstances of Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Egypt, as well as in emergency settings.
175. Funding remained problematic with a regional shortfall of USD 1.5 billion for the next six months.
176. Board members expressed deep appreciation for WFP staff working in the region, noting that in many cases food security would only be achieved with political solutions to conflict. Members called for increased support for the region, particularly for Gaza.
177. Board members asked questions about the food security impact of recent fires in the Syrian Arab Republic, the effect of funding shortfalls and the fate of USD 700 million of funding for Yemen that had not been used in 2018. One member called on WFP to engage in more development activities and to extend collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies, for instance to support livelihoods for refugees.

178. The Regional Director said that stretched human and financial resources meant that his team was constantly confronted with difficult decisions, such as which children to prioritize for assistance. Regarding the unspent funding for Yemen, he confirmed that it had been reallocated to 2019. The crop losses associated with the fires in the Syrian Arab Republic were estimated at 5 percent of the forecast harvest, so the impact on food security would not be significant.
179. The Deputy Executive Director then announced that the Egypt country office had become the seventh country office to successfully complete WFP's gender transformation programme, thereby earning a gender mainstreaming certificate.

Oral update on WFP operations in Yemen

180. The Yemen Country Director updated the Board on WFP operations in that country, where conflict was in its fifth year; the Stockholm Agreement brokered by the United Nations in December was holding but the situation was fragile. So far in 2019 WFP had reached 10.6 million of the 12 million people targeted.
181. Preliminary findings of a WFP famine risk assessment carried out in May, covering 29 of the 45 districts with pockets of people in phase 5 (famine) of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), had revealed improved food security resulting from scaled up WFP assistance. Having regained access to the Red Sea Mills in late February, WFP had sent a technical team to fumigate the 51,000 mt of wheat stored there, which would soon be ready for milling. WFP had also provided food assistance to displaced people affected by the conflict.
182. Following good progress in the biometric registration of beneficiaries in the southern governorates of Aden, Lahj and Shabwa, WFP was using CBTs in Aden and aimed to extend biometric registration to cover beneficiaries throughout Yemen. Despite signing a concept note on the use of biometrics in January, however, the authorities in Sana'a were raising objections to WFP's planned roll-out of the registration system, and the lack of agreement was undermining WFP's ability to target and reach, in an accountable manner, some 9 million beneficiaries in areas under Houthi control.
183. The country office faced three possible scenarios: full agreement of the Sana'a authorities would resolve the issue but was unlikely; outright rejection by the authorities, which would lead WFP to consider widespread suspensions of general food assistance distributions; and continuation of the negotiations, which was the most likely scenario. In the absence of progress in the negotiations WFP would be obliged to suspend its distributions of general food assistance for people in Sana'a while scaling up its programmes for the treatment and prevention of malnutrition among the most vulnerable women and children.
184. WFP's operations in Yemen faced a budget shortfall of USD 854 million until the end of 2019 and urgently required USD 40–50 million for general food distributions in August. In the absence of additional contributions, suspensions of CBT and nutrition programmes would start in July.
185. Board members said that the situation was alarming and distressing, and they reiterated their condemnation of any action that hindered the delivery of humanitarian assistance, putting the lives of vulnerable people at risk. Recognizing that biometric registration was essential in ensuring that assistance reached targeted beneficiaries, and emphasizing that suspension of assistance was a measure of last resort, members expressed support for management's plans and requested that the Board be kept apprised of developments and involved in related decision making. Any suspensions should be coordinated with the humanitarian country team and other partners in the country.

186. The Deputy Executive Director provided further information on how the situation had evolved since WFP first became aware of the potential for the diversion of assistance in early 2018. Agreements between WFP and the Sana'a authorities at the end of 2018 and in early 2019 had resulted in improved access to affected areas for WFP personnel and agreement to proceed with biometric registration. Since then, however, the authorities had withdrawn their agreement, citing concerns about data collection methods and fears that beneficiary data could be misused in unspecified ways by third parties. Discussions continued and, while no date had been set, WFP viewed the following days as the last chance to avoid the suspension of operations. Given the authorities' request that WFP start using CBTs in Sana'a, biometric registration was essential.
187. Measures for alleviating the impact on targeted people included careful selection of areas for potential suspensions where WFP had faced the greatest accountability issues and where there would be the least impact on the most vulnerable people, avoiding to the extent possible areas in IPC phases 4 and 5. There was, however, no guarantee that the authorities would react as WFP hoped. Management agreed with the Board that all United Nations agencies should work as one on the issue.
188. The Executive Director added further details of WFP's deliberations on what was a difficult decision. At the end of 2018, WFP had found evidence that food was being diverted, when targeted beneficiaries reported receiving none or only a fraction of their WFP rations. Children were dying as a result of those diversions. WFP's consultations and advocacy with the Sana'a authorities mirrored the successful ones it had had with the Saudi-led coalition in 2017. In the area identified for the first suspensions, WFP targeted 1.1 million beneficiaries for monthly general food assistance, which was provided through rounds of distributions, each serving a part of this total number. The next distribution in this area was scheduled for 22 June.

2019/EB.A/24 Interim country strategic plan – Algeria (2019–2022) (for approval)

189. The Algeria Country Director outlined the main features of the interim CSP (ICSP) for that country, saying that its overall aim was to ensure access to food and to eliminate malnutrition among the camp-based refugee population. WFP's work in Algeria had followed the same pattern for three decades, but the ICSP activities reflected two strategic shifts based on several assessments conducted in recent years. Malnutrition would be addressed comprehensively through all activities, especially in the refugee camps, and synergies with other humanitarian partners and stronger intersectoral coordination would be encouraged, with improved gender responsiveness as a cross-cutting issue. The increased needs to be addressed in the ICSP – partly a result of population growth – would be met through increased diversification of the food basket accompanied by improved community-based targeting. Major innovations were the scaling up of hydroponic cultivation of green fodder, fish farming and water recycling, for which dedicated funding and technical assistance would be needed. The Country Director closed by thanking the Algerian Government, the refugee camps' leadership and donors for their support.
190. Board members observed that humanitarian assistance for the refugees came from several sources, including UNHCR, the European Union's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, WFP and Oxfam, and noted that the arid areas around the camps provided no opportunities for productive employment. Acute malnutrition was a constant threat that particularly affected pregnant women and girls, and Board members observed with pleasure that the ICSP would address the issue beginning with distributions of nutritious food and CBTs; in addition, they cautioned that the identification processes for registering refugees in consultation with the Algerian authorities should be upgraded. Board members approved of the capacity building feature of the ICSP, which, in combination with the hydroponics and fish farming initiatives, would enable

refugees to achieve a degree of self-sufficiency. Board members said that intensive advocacy for increased funding would be required to make the activities sustainable in the long term and that due attention should be given to cross-cutting issues such as climate change. Board members urged WFP to support UNHCR in implementing its protection mandate and asked about the extent to which FAO programmes connected with the ICSP. Several members expressed their satisfaction with the consultative approach to establishing the ICSP and with the sound data on which it was based.

191. In response to the Board member's observations, the Country Director emphasized the sensitivity of the situation, especially with regard to complementary activities for refugees, including capacity building. FAO was currently not working directly in the refugee camps, but technical assistance was provided by Algerian institutes. The Country Director expressed gratitude to all donors for their support and welcomed any technical assistance and dedicated funding directed towards complementary activities.
192. There was some discussion of issues connected with the drafting of the ICSP, some of the numbers provided and some of the terminology used, but it was agreed that assistance for the beneficiaries was the overriding humanitarian issue and that the Board's discussions should focus on how such assistance was planned and implemented.

2019/EB.A/25 Country strategic plan – Armenia (2019–2024) (for approval)

193. In an overview of the Armenia CSP, the Country Director reported that WFP had established cordial and effective relations with Armenia's Government, with which it would work to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition through two interconnected approaches – ensuring equitable access to food and developing evidence-based policies to strengthen the Government's capacity and gradually transfer programmes to it. The home-grown school feeding initiative would be a model for food-based interventions and would promote, among other things, improved dietary habits. CSP activities were designed to be sustainable and equitable, with gender transformative approaches a key feature; in addition they had been conceived with the sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection in mind. The CSP would operate on the basis of engagement with communities, which were the principal drivers of the activities and actors of change. A diverse range of partners would support WFP's work with the objective of achieving zero hunger in Armenia by 2030.
194. Board members noted with satisfaction that the CSP was fully aligned with the Government programmes and priorities, as well as with the goals of the United Nations development assistance framework for Armenia. Similarly, Board members expressed satisfaction that local procurement, especially through women farmers, was enabled by the introduction of CBTs. Members also approved of the joint partnerships established among Rome-based agencies to provide technical support.
195. Board members expressed satisfaction with the proposed handover of school feeding to the Government by 2023, with WFP's equitable approaches in its activities, as well as with capacity building in support of the Government, which would lead to sustainable food security and food sovereignty.
196. The Country Director thanked the Board for its support, reiterating that the CSP would be implemented in full cooperation with the Government and that gender transformative activities were a major focus. In closing remarks, the Country Director thanked donors for their contributions and support.

2019/EB.A/26 Country strategic plan – Morocco (2019–2021) (for approval)

197. The Morocco Head of Office presented the CSP for Morocco, saying that WFP's role in the country was to support improvements to the national school feeding programme based on deep analysis of the existing programme and close consultation with the Government. The CSP would help link rural women's groups around schools with the procurement of local produce for school meals, improving the nutritional content of school meals while supporting the economic and social development of local communities.
198. The CSP was built on private sector collaboration on funding and expertise and South–South cooperation, which would enable other countries in the region to share best practices in school feeding. The plan also demonstrated how a relatively small investment could have a very large impact, as the capacity building provided would optimize the entire nationally funded school feeding programme.
199. Members described the CSP as well designed, praising its clear transition and exit strategy. Several members welcomed the plan as an example of the contribution WFP could make in countries with established food security and sovereignty, noting the long-term positive impact of capacity strengthening.
200. Some members called on WFP to include targets in the CSP to facilitate the assessment of its implementation. Others urged the organization to improve its reporting on local procurement and to engage in local procurement wherever feasible. One member encouraged WFP to work with partners to improve water management techniques in Morocco; another stressed that it was important to ensure that women were included in development projects.
201. The Head of Office thanked the Board members for their comments. She explained that WFP planned to use the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) tool – developed in conjunction with the World Bank – to quantify the impact of its capacity building work in Morocco. She also noted that the CSP increased the opportunity for WFP to build on its experience with home-grown school feeding programmes as a potential long-term solution to malnutrition.

2019/EB.A/27 Country strategic plan – Tajikistan (2019–2024) (for approval)

202. The Country Director presented the CSP for Tajikistan, which had been developed in close consultation with the Government, development partners, donor representatives and the people of Tajikistan. He said that the CSP was aligned with the national development strategy and reflected the Government's clear commitment to gradually assuming responsibility for and ownership of the programmes.
203. The CSP focused on developing human capital and infrastructure, taking a transformational approach in order to support sustainable development. The proposed assistance would contribute to reducing gender inequalities and would take into account the specific needs of vulnerable people, including those with disabilities.
204. Members welcomed the CSP, saying that it would help the Government to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition, build resilience and introduce effective social safety nets. Members said they appreciated the focus on school feeding, which would encourage school participation and learning as well as combat malnutrition.
205. Given the multiple challenges faced by Tajikistan, the Board encouraged WFP to increase its collaboration with the Government and partners to maximize the impact of its programming. Members said that cooperation would be particularly valuable in disaster reduction, improving access to drinking water and expanding sanitation infrastructure.

206. Some members urged WFP to involve local women in development projects, to support smallholder farmers and to ensure that beneficiaries had access to healthy diets with more vegetables, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas.
207. The Country Director thanked the Board members for their comments and support.

Asia and the Pacific portfolio

208. The Regional Director described WFP's successful responses to flooding in Nepal and Bangladesh and drought in Sri Lanka and ongoing work in Afghanistan.
209. In the crisis at the border of Myanmar and Bangladesh, where the latter was hosting 620,000 Rohingya refugees, forest had been cleared in order to build a megacamp for the refugees. Not only were refugees vulnerable to fire, but site clearance and ad hoc habitation had had a negative environmental impact. Refugees had global acute malnutrition rates over 24 percent while a lack of clean water and sanitary facilities was exacerbating nutrition and health problems.
210. The scale of the influx had placed heavy demands on the country office, although WFP had been delivering. WFP had activated common services and had provided high-energy biscuits and general food distribution, including by drawing from Government of Bangladesh rice reserves. Currently it was working with FAO on agricultural initiatives to support livelihood interventions for both refugees and host communities. Some USD 50 million would be required to deliver lifesaving assistance until the end of February. There was growing concern over adequate site planning and access roads in view of the 2018 monsoon season.
211. Due to insecurity in northern Myanmar, WFP's food assistance had been suspended and its staff temporarily relocated. WFP had obtained limited access in northern Rakhine State and was negotiating for fuller access. In the meantime WFP's October and November food allocations were being delivered in tandem with the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. While the situation remained volatile, plans for a rice crop assessment were in place with FAO.
212. In this way, the IRM roll out in the region remained on schedule.
213. Board members thanked the Regional Director, highlighting the need for a regional strategic framework for vulnerable Pacific island states to replace individual country approaches, particularly with regard to logistics, telecommunications and needs assessments. Members expressed satisfaction that training, assessments of infrastructure and food requirements and development opportunities were already under way.
214. Board members called for more extensive visits to refugee areas in Bangladesh and Myanmar to enable accurate assessments of needs. Members took note of Regional Director's observation in his visit to camps in Rakhine of the absence of NGOs, while Myanmar Country Director shared reports of devastated and abandoned Rohingya villages.
215. The Permanent Representative of Bangladesh made a statement, saying that 1 million Rohingya refugees, a quarter of whom were unaccompanied children due to their parents being killed, had entered his country to escape persecution and genocide in Myanmar. He further elaborated that the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Women had registered widespread rape in Myanmar. While Bangladesh was implementing extraordinary measures to accommodate the refugees, and was also deeply grateful for the support received from WFP and donors, the food and shelter needs of 1 million people were overwhelming, and much more funding was required. The Executive Director was invited to visit the refugee area, in follow up to his October mission, as soon as practical to view the situation first hand.

2019/EB.A/28 Interim multi-country strategic plan – Pacific (2019–2022) (for approval)

216. Management drew attention to the extensive consultations with stakeholders that had made it possible to finalize an interim multi-country strategic plan for the Pacific region. With an anticipated increase in the number of natural disasters, the strategic plan focused on preparedness, particularly in small island states. WFP was also working in the cluster system with a view to minimizing the effects of disasters: the focus was on capacity building for governments and other partners – no food or cash-based assistance was included in the strategic plan. All stakeholders were urged to follow WFP's lead in addressing challenges related to gender issues and to people with disabilities. With an enormous area to cover and in view of the diverse countries in which it worked, WFP was promoting innovative activities and approaches in partnership with various humanitarian and development actors, providing training in logistics and mobile communications technology. The identification of emergency equipment stockpiles was to be undertaken across the region, and WFP was participating in efforts to minimize carbon emissions from shipping. There was a need for more joint monitoring of operations in view of the dispersed nature of WFP's office structure. Overall, the strategic plan sought to introduce operations on a modest scale with a view to subsequent expansion in the light of experience.
217. Board members acknowledged the limitations imposed by the scale and complexity of the Pacific region, particularly in terms of logistics and diversity, and urged WFP to work with governments to ensure that countries identified their needs accurately. Given that delivery pipelines involved shipping over long distances, WFP should consider introducing special management and control systems. Board members spoke favourably of WFP's position as a facilitator and capacity builder rather than a provider and urged regional managers to ensure that their work was aligned with national requirements and with other United Nations programmes. It was also essential to propose plans that attracted the interest of donors, especially those able to provide flexible funding and in-kind contributions. Members supported the innovative approaches proposed by WFP and recommended that the lessons learned from the strategic plan be widely disseminated. Several members pointed out that WFP had to address not only the challenges of working in widely dispersed island states but also to maintain a rapid response capability in the event of natural disasters; in such a scenario, the integration of activities through effective partnerships was the only feasible way forward. Board members observed that in addition to addressing the risks associated with disasters, for example in its emergency telecommunications systems, WFP should also seek sustainable funding for its work on gender and education issues, improvement of social protection systems and support for local agricultural productivity, all of which could contribute to long-term improvements in food and nutrition security. Board members advised that WFP's partners in the strategic plan include academic institutions and private-sector organizations and in general expressed approval of the range of stakeholders involved in developing the strategic plan; there was, however, concern that funding was inadequate, particularly in view of the high cost of doing business in the region, and members suggested that non-core activities be reduced accordingly.
218. Management observed that the strategic plan was in line with the Secretary-General's policies for coordination – the major partners included the World Bank, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – but WFP also had to localize its operations and adapt to the national needs of various countries. Noting the Board's advice with regard to prioritization and operational monitoring, management drew attention once again to the challenges posed by low funding levels and to the possible tensions between donor priorities and national priorities.

Latin America and the Caribbean portfolio

219. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean gave an update on the situation in the region, where emerging humanitarian issues and slow onset disasters were having an impact on food security and nutrition.
220. In Haiti, drought and socioeconomic instability had eroded household food security and 2.6 million people were facing acute or moderate food insecurity. Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua were facing one of the worst dry harvest seasons of the past 35 years, and in South America growing flows of migrants were increasing needs in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.
221. In addition to providing immediate food assistance in crisis-affected countries, WFP was strengthening emergency preparedness in the Caribbean and building up social protection mechanisms throughout the region, focusing on filling gaps in national systems, providing technical support and strengthening government capacity. South-South cooperation was also key, supporting the exchange of experience and best practices with regard to social protection systems, nutrition-sensitive approaches, disaster risk management and support for smallholder farmers.
222. Board members welcomed the update and praised WFP's work in the region. Several members underscored the challenges posed by rising migration, which put pressure on social infrastructure in host communities. Other members commended WFP for the relationships between its teams, host governments and donors, which facilitated its operations in the region.

2019/EB.A/29 Country strategic plan – Haiti (2019–2023) (for approval)

223. The Haiti Country Director, in his introduction of the CSP for that country, thanked the Government and donors for their extensive contributions to its development. The CSP was based on the national policy and strategy for food security and nutrition, developed under the leadership of the Prime Minister's office with support from WFP, and reflected the challenges faced by the country, including high exposure to natural disasters and recurrent political and social instability, as well as rising security risks for WFP operations.
224. Board members commended the CSP, especially its integration of resilience and cross-cutting issues such as migration and gender. They expressed concern over rising food insecurity in Haiti, the sharp deterioration of the political and economic situation and the country's high dependence on food imports.
225. Several members praised WFP's work on food security and nutrition, early recovery and support for local agriculture. One member welcomed WFP's intention to invest in nutrition-sensitive and gender- and age-responsive safety nets, while another praised the focus on South-South cooperation and government consultation.
226. One member called on WFP to use CBTs to address urgent needs wherever possible. Another urged management to ensure a smooth leadership transition in Haiti with the imminent departure of the Country Director. Others highlighted the need to strengthen internal controls, carefully select and monitor partners and ensure that social protection systems were shock responsive.
227. Members asked how WFP would prioritize operations in the event of funding shortfalls and how the current political and security environment could affect operations, particularly in the light of the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH).

228. The Country Director said that the CSP would increase local purchases, scale up home-grown school feeding and boost investment in development and resilience activities. He reported that the country office had been strengthening its internal controls for the past two years, as confirmed by the findings of a recent external audit. WFP currently used CBTs for all operations in Haiti except school feeding.
229. In terms of partnerships, he emphasized that WFP was already working with other actors on activities such as the new food security and nutrition strategy, which had been drawn up in collaboration with FAO, UNICEF, WHO and the Government, as well as a social protection policy being developed with the International Labour Organization, UNICEF, WHO, UNDP and UN-Women.
230. In response to the planned departure of MINUJUSTH in October 2019 and the deteriorating security situation, the United Nations country team had recently updated its security risk management plan. A mission from WFP security was under way in the country to examine potential additional security arrangements after the withdrawal of MINUJUSTH.
231. The Country Director recognized that targeting was a challenge. WFP was working with the Ministry of Social Affairs to map household vulnerabilities. Twenty-two percent of the population had been covered, increasing the hard data available for targeting.
232. The Deputy Executive Director assured the Board that management and the outgoing Country Director would ensure a smooth transition of leadership in the country office.

Oral report on the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP (for information)

233. Noting that the 2019 joint field visit to Colombia by members of the executive boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP had been coordinated by WFP, the President thanked WFP staff on behalf of the participants for their excellent work and their counterparts in Colombia for their warm hospitality. The visit had given the participants first-hand insights into ongoing work supporting the Colombian Government in implementing the peace agreement, migrant-support and re-forestation programmes jointly implemented with the Government, as well as into the work of the United Nations. The President said that WFP was greatly appreciated in Colombia but there was nevertheless scope for increasing the focus there on prevention and development and for even greater coordination with neighbouring countries and with the 23 United Nations agencies, two non-resident agencies and one peacekeeping mission working there.
234. The visit had made clear that the Colombian Government faced many difficulties, including food insecurity, civil unrest, migration from Venezuela, drug trafficking and environmental degradation, and that sound data and much greater coherence were urgently needed to make the operations addressing those issues as effective as possible. Notwithstanding the challenges, the generosity and hospitality of the Government towards migrants was lauded as exemplary. A particularly pressing need was for institutional capacity building; the issue was being addressed by the Government but required the coordinated long-term support of United Nations agencies and other partners. The visit also demonstrated the importance of United Nations development system reform, including strengthened resident coordinators who had the political backing of governments. The Government and others had made clear that, in a country where 23 United Nations agencies were operating, there was a distinct need for better coordination, both among the agencies themselves, including in particular the Rome-based agencies, and between the agencies and the Government.
235. Overall, the participants and the Government of Colombia were of the opinion that the field visit had been a valuable and encouraging experience.

East Africa portfolio

236. The Regional Director for East Africa informed the Board of plans to reach the 26.5 million vulnerable people in the region with in-kind food deliveries and, funds permitting, CBTs to the value of USD 457 million to increase access to nutritious food and support local economies. Resilience-building plans involved the enhancement of food systems and post-harvest management, support for smallholder farmers and improved access to and consumption of nutritious food in collaboration with partners, particularly the Government and the World Bank. Studies were to be commissioned with the University of California, Davis, to assess the effects of WFP's interventions on communities and local economies.
237. There had been no improvement in the food security situation in South Sudan, where 60 percent of the population faced acute shortages in the May–July lean season; sustained humanitarian assistance was vital, but safe access could not be guaranteed in many areas. The 4.4 million refugees and IDPs in the region also required continued support because the political situation prevented large-scale returns. The recent signing of a peace agreement had, however, resulted in greater humanitarian access: food supplies were being delivered at much reduced cost by road and river transport, which had replaced costly deliveries by air; savings were estimated at USD 100 million. Pre-positioned and warehoused food was guarded by communities to prevent looting, and work was ongoing with the Government to rehabilitate roads and river transport and to dismantle unofficial check points along delivery routes where illegal cash transit fees were levied.
238. In Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda up to 17 million people needed urgent food assistance in view of an anticipated drought, which would among other things reduce WFP's ability to procure food locally. The evident need was for collective investment in preparedness for and mitigation of the effects of prolonged drought. In collaboration with the governments of Ethiopia and Kenya, WFP had enhanced social protection and safety-net mechanisms to reduce relief requirements and enable WFP to focus on special nutrition assistance for malnourished children and cash-based assistance for their families. In Somalia, the Government had asked WFP to provide food and CBTs to address drought-related food shortages. WFP expected to target 2.3 million people at IPC phase 3 and above.
239. The arrival in Uganda of the Ebola virus from the Democratic Republic of the Congo was causing concern. Local authorities in Uganda were applying stringent controls at border crossings and the situation was being carefully monitored in Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan and in the regional bureau.
240. Board members expressed appreciation for the detailed overview, noting in particular that because most agriculture in the region was rain-fed the effects of drought were severe and likely to continue as a result of climate change. There were clear needs for climate-resilient food systems based on drought-resistant crop varieties and improved irrigation systems, which could be addressed by the Rome-based agencies in partnership with UNICEF. The urgent need for upgraded systems to address the spread of Ebola was also evident; some Board members proposed investment in an eradication programme for the region. Board members were pleased to note that a gender-transformation certificate had been awarded to the Kenya country office, bringing the number of offices so rewarded to 22 worldwide.
241. The Regional Director thanked all donors who had supported WFP activities in the region, stressing once again that the combination of large-scale drought-related food insecurity and the potential spread of Ebola into the region constituted a serious challenge to all.

West Africa portfolio

242. The Deputy Regional Director highlighted the deteriorating security situation in West Africa, linked to the expansion of non-state armed groups and a rapidly shrinking state presence in large swathes of the Sahel. Attacks against schools were widespread, leaving about 400,000 children out of education and vulnerable to recruitment by non-state armed groups.
243. Food insecurity had declined in West Africa compared to the previous two years, but an estimated 12.8 million people would require assistance during the 2019 lean season. The incidence of acute malnutrition was alarmingly high, with national global acute malnutrition between 10 and 14 percent in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. UNICEF and WFP were working on a joint approach to managing acute malnutrition during the upcoming lean season.
244. Beyond humanitarian crisis response, WFP was implementing a five-year resilience plan in the Sahel. Launched in September 2018, the plan sought to provide 2 million people with an integrated package of assistance comprising lean season support, food for assets, school meals, nutrition and support for smallholder farmer programmes.
245. He highlighted the various strong partnerships with São Tomé and Príncipe, where the Government was funding two thirds of the country strategic plan, with Benin, where more than USD 50 million from the national budget was being directed to the national integrated school feeding plan, and with Côte d'Ivoire, where a centre of excellence against hunger and malnutrition had recently been established and fully funded by the Government.
246. In closing, the Deputy Regional Director highlighted that there was an urgent need for USD 253 million to fund WFP's emergency response, which was vital to staving off catastrophe in the crisis-affected countries of the region. A further USD 35 million was needed for resilience activities targeting 1 million people by the end of 2019.

2019/EB.A/30 Country strategic plan – Benin (2019–2023) (for approval)

247. The Benin Country Director presented the CSP for that country, through which WFP aimed to support the Government in the development of a national home-grown school feeding programme. Together with communities and local authorities, WFP planned to use school feeding as an entry point for the promotion of local development through links to activities in other sectors such as health and nutrition, education, agriculture and social protection. Efforts to improve conditions for women, girls and persons with disabilities would be made throughout CSP implementation.
248. Board members welcomed the CSP's holistic, multisectoral approach to development, which would bring together the ministries responsible for education, health, social protection and agriculture to enhance education, health and social safety nets. Members applauded the country office's consultations with a wide range of stakeholders during CSP development and encouraged the office to build on that collaboration. They also noted that comments and questions raised during consultations with the Board on previous versions of the CSP had been addressed in the current draft. Observing that WFP had long experience and a good reputation in Benin, where it had been present since 1964, members said that the CSP showed WFP's potential to contribute to the development and implementation of national policies and plans for the achievement of SDGs 2 and 17. They emphasized the value of mapping all the actors working in the school feeding sector in Benin as a way of promoting synergies.
249. In the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, WFP's engagement with smallholder farmers on strengthening capacities, enhancing productivity and facilitating links to markets was particularly relevant, and members encouraged management to work with FAO and other partners to ensure that farmers had the technology, legislation and inputs they

needed to move beyond subsistence or semi-subsistence agriculture. They also applauded the gender perspective of the CSP, including its focus on supporting women smallholders, and the plans for using South–South cooperation to facilitate capacity strengthening and the development of activities to improve food security, nutrition, social protection, education and resilience to shocks, including shocks caused by climate change. They welcomed the ambitious target of providing school feeding in 100 percent of primary schools by 2025.

2019/EB.A/31 Country strategic plan – Guinea-Bissau (2019–2024) (for approval)

250. The Country Director observed that although Guinea-Bissau ranked 177th in the Human Development index it had fertile land and abundant water and marine resources. These advantages had not yet been fully utilized, however, owing to widespread poverty, chronic malnutrition, high child mortality, illiteracy and unstable government, all of which crippled the development of human capital. WFP and its partners were committed to fostering stable governance, sustainable development and equity while reducing risks of conflict, corruption, illicit trafficking and fundamentalism. The CSP focused on enabling the population through capacity building, particularly in terms of developing the potential of children, young people and women and liberating the latter from stifling social norms and practices with a view to enabling them to become productive and responsible community members.
251. The CSP aimed to maximize national capacities for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring based on enhanced evidence generation, technical assistance and knowledge management. It would link WFP's food assistance to the home-grown school feeding programme, local development and peace building. Success hinged largely on working with the Government to develop human capital, empower women, accelerate capacity development and promote social behaviour change.
252. Board members praised the alignment of the CSP with the Government's development priorities, as well as the plans to address the empowerment of women and other social development issues in alignment with the SDG goals related to education, health, gender equality, economic diversification and new agricultural techniques. The proposed expansion of the home-grown school feeding and nutrition programmes was particularly welcomed. Board members observed that multilateral development assistance such as that provided through the CSP required government leadership and eventual ownership to ensure that it was sustainable in the long term. Several members suggested that increased South-South cooperation would be beneficial for Guinea-Bissau, noting as an example the tripartite agreement being implemented with the Government of Brazil and WFP on technical cooperation for home-grown school feeding.
253. Board members also said that it would be necessary to explore innovative funding options to support the CSP, such as one that Spain was working on for Guinea-Bissau. Several members expressed approval for WFP's support for national home-grown school feeding, which would indirectly help women farmers to take advantage of new markets and increase revenues.
254. The representative of Guinea-Bissau thanked the Board members for the approval of the CSP, saying that it reflected the needs in the country and noting that the Government had recently promulgated a law on home-grown school feeding that would have multiple beneficial effects in combatting poverty, increasing household incomes and promoting food production by women, which would contribute to gender equality and improved nutrition. The Government had also established a national nutrition day and adopted a zero hunger strategy that would work together with WFP's programmes to reduce the suffering of the population and promote the conditions necessary for stability and

food self-sustainability, in which the Government was committed to increasing its investment.

2019/EB.A/32 Country strategic plan – Sao Tome and Principe (2019–2024) (for approval)

255. Noting that Sao Tome and Principe had yet to address fully challenges related to poverty and food insecurity, hunger and nutrition, unemployment, poor infrastructure, limited food production, reliance on food imports, underdeveloped and poorly integrated markets and food value chains and the lack of capable human capital, particularly among women, the Country Director emphasized that the CSP was aligned with government priorities and the SDG 2 and zero hunger goals. WFP had handed the school feeding programme – a major national safety net – over to the Government in 2016, but the latter still lacked the capacity to implement it fully. The principal aim of the CSP was, therefore, to enhance government capacity to implement a sustainable gender-transformative home-grown school feeding programme and related food-security and nutrition programmes with a view to final handover by 2030. This would involve supporting the Government in the development of incentives for smallholder farmers and improved value chains. The Country Director thanked all donors for their support and lauded the Government for its commitment to providing USD 1 million of the total budget of USD 1.5 million for the next five years.
256. Board members welcomed the CSP proposals, praising the thorough analysis and risk assessments that supported it and the practicality of its activities, particularly in taking into account the opportunities offered by the country's extensive coast to provide food and related employment. Members expressed approval of the emphasis on developing human capital and particularly the focus on women's empowerment and the development of their potential in agriculture and other sectors. They expressed appreciation for the partnership with the Government as the best way to develop long-term sustainable national capacities and sustainable systems in a context of humanitarian action combined with increasing development assistance. Some members suggested that increased South-South cooperation along the lines already established with Brazil Centre of Excellence Against Hunger could considerably enhance CSP outcomes.

2019/EB.A/33 Country strategic plan – Liberia (2019–2023) (for approval)

257. The Liberia Country Director said that the CSP for that country was based on home-grown school feeding with a view to supporting the education and agriculture sectors in line with the Government's commitment to achieving zero hunger by 2030. The CSP activities included programmes focused on social protection, beneficiary protection and accountability to beneficiaries, with particular attention to the needs of women and girls; all were fully budgeted. The resilience-building element of the CSP was informed by various assessments, including a recently concluded SABER survey, and provided the framework in which WFP and its partners would support the Government's programmes with a view to optimizing coordination and establishing a handover strategy. The CSP was designed to align with other United Nations programmes in Liberia, particularly those of FAO and IFAD.
258. The Board valued the CSP's approach in supporting the Government and working in partnership with a variety of other stakeholders. The overall aims of improving resilience and ending hunger were warmly noted by Board members, particularly in that children would have greater access to nutritious foods and that communities would become more resilient to shocks and more self-sufficient in the long term, with improved social support systems. Board members said that the CSP would be a major part of Liberia's rebuilding after prolonged civil war and that it would encourage farmers to return to agricultural production. Several Board members highlighted the home-grown school feeding programme, saying that it would support smallholder farmers as well as improved educational outcomes, community resilience and long-term development. Board members commended the partnership approach to implementation: partnerships with

United Nations and national organizations would help the Government to address the current low levels of national agricultural output and low nutrition scores and to nurture a productive national workforce. Some members observed in particular that increased food security and better nutrition would prevent people, particularly children, from resorting to theft to procure food.

259. The Country Director thanked the Board and donors for their support and undertook to keep the Board informed of progress in implementing the CSP.

2019/EB.A/34 Interim country strategic plan – Guinea (2019–2022) (for approval)

260. The Guinea Country Director presented the ICSP for that country, which would be superseded by a full CSP based on findings from a zero hunger strategic review that the Government planned to carry out in 2020.
261. The ICSP was informed by national policies, consultations with partners and recommendations resulting from evaluations of recent WFP operations. The plan's flexibility would allow WFP to strike a balance between operational activities and capacity building and to intervene in crises in order to save lives and protect livelihoods. Communities and the Government were the focus of activities aimed at building the resilience of vulnerable people, strengthening safety nets, creating productive assets and supporting home-grown school feeding. Work on financial inclusion built on successful pilots implemented with FAO and IFAD, and nutrition would be an important component of all WFP activities. Capacity building focused on supporting the Government as it assumed ownership of sustainable solutions to hunger and malnutrition that had been piloted by WFP. The country office would follow its partnership action plan to ensure that resources were mobilized to enable the delivery of ICSP results.
262. Board members observed that the implementation of the ICSP would help to address obstacles to the attainment of SDG 2 such as weak coordination and capacities, fragmentation of programmes and slow implementation of national programmes. Members expressed appreciation for WFP's focus on transition and exit strategies and its planned shift from the direct implementation of food assistance activities to the provision of technical support to partners. They endorsed the planned South–South and triangular cooperation initiatives, particularly through exchange visits to other countries in the region with school feeding programmes.
263. Members welcomed the plans for developing supply chains and linking smallholder farmers to WFP's local procurement and other markets, including through the sharing of market information. Improving the livelihoods of farmers would contribute to the development of food systems that were resilient to climate change. Members encouraged WFP to increase its collaboration with FAO, IFAD and other United Nations agencies.
264. Members praised WFP's planned support for home-grown school feeding programmes as a good way of contributing to education outcomes, good nutrition and gender equality and encouraged the country office to assist the Government in preparing for the zero hunger strategic review.

Administrative and managerial matters

Address by staff body representatives

265. The representative of the Professional Staff Association welcomed the opportunity to address the Board, recalling that the association was the official organization supporting national and international professionals in affiliation with the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System, which represented 60,000 staff in 17 United Nations bodies.

266. Consultations with WFP management were robust, particularly with the Deputy Executive Director and the Human Resources Division, and had covered the issue of consistency in the management of staff issues; the Professional Staff Association was calling for a WFP policy to ensure equal treatment. The association felt that the rules covering delegations of authority had allowed managers to rely too much, sometimes for prolonged periods, on consultants and temporary personnel, who currently accounted for 56 percent of the workforce and even occupied managerial positions. The effects of this included reducing opportunities for regular staff members and negative impact on the pension fund. WFP's oversight mechanisms should be applied to prevent inequality and inconsistency.
267. The association supported WFP in eliminating all forms of misconduct and creating a workplace where staff could report such issues without fear of retaliation; he noted with approval the establishment of the joint working group addressing cases of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination. WFP was urged to accelerate investigations and related disciplinary procedures because delays had significant consequences for alleged perpetrators and victims. The association felt that the FAO Appeals Committee was failing to address the issue of lengthy delays in its processes: a long backlog had accrued, and staff were adversely affected. WFP was asked to address the problem as a matter of urgency.
268. The representative of the Union of General Service Staff of FAO and WFP informed the Board that the recruitment of General Service staff was proceeding well following the end of the seven-year freeze – 64 G-3 and 35 G-4 positions had been filled – and thanked the many staff members who had supported the process, which would provide a more stable workforce for handling core activities. She echoed the Professional Staff Association representative in calling upon WFP to review its contracting of temporary staff and the resulting inequalities and to eradicate all forms of harassment. The union was pleased with the removal of time limits for claims. Overcrowding at headquarters was becoming a problem, and WFP was urged to install soundproof panels in shared offices to maintain good workplace conditions. The union would take part in PACE processes and a review of job profiles with a view to developing clear vacancy announcements. The sudden and unexplained closure of the commissary was a concern, and WFP was urged to seek its reinstatement in collaboration with FAO. Also of great concern was WFP's departure from the Joint Advisory Committee on Medical Coverage in that it affected relations with the other Rome-based agencies: the union would welcome discussion of the issue to ensure that staff well-being was not compromised.

Oral update on harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination
(for consideration)

269. The co-chairs of the Joint Board/management working group on harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination presented an update. The working group had met monthly since February, with its two sub-working groups meeting more frequently in between; a detailed report on the findings and activities of the working group would be submitted to the Board at its 2019 second regular session.
270. Since February, the working group had provided direction and substance for an external review planned for July, which would comprise a cultural survey of all WFP staff, one-to-one interviews and focus groups to gain qualitative insight into the drivers of abusive conduct within the organization. The results of the review were due at the end of August.
271. The joint working group had also been working with the Office of the Executive Director to develop a communications campaign aimed at encouraging the full participation of WFP staff in the external review and reinforce messages on guaranteed confidentiality and WFP's commitment to taking swift action on all reports of abusive conduct. The campaign would begin in July.

272. The co-chairs noted that WFP was seeking external expert advice in its efforts to tackle HSHAPD. The external review would be conducted by Willis Towers Watson, a private company, and up to three external experts, ranging from organizational psychologists to counsellors and academics, were in the process of being recruited to provide unbiased input on WFP's processes.
273. Board members expressed appreciation for the update and commended the working group for its work to date. Some members urged WFP not to overlook the issue of discrimination. One member remarked that it would have been opportune for the WFP staff representatives to be present for the update, given the importance of keeping all staff informed of the measures being taken to combat HSHAPD.
274. Some members called on WFP to ensure that its zero tolerance policy was implemented in all of its partnerships, with monitoring systems in place to guarantee accountability. They encouraged WFP to develop a victim-centred approach, to ensure that staff felt safe to come forward with any concerns and to work with all partners to eradicate HSHAPD and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) from the aid sector. They emphasized the importance of reminding staff of appropriate standards of conduct with beneficiaries and of how to report any issues.
275. Some members noted that the external review did not extend to non-WFP staff, and they called on WFP to report regularly to the Board on SEA prevention. While members welcomed the use of indicators in the corporate results framework to measure progress on HSHAPD and SEA, they encouraged WFP to ensure that the indicators also reflected whether WFP staff considered their work environment to be safe.
276. Management noted that the issue of discrimination had gained prominence in WFP with the publication of the HSHAPD policy in March 2018, and cases of discrimination were counted separately from other forms of abusive conduct. Management also noted that the oral update was open to all staff and agreed to invite the formal staff representatives to future updates.
277. The President concluded the item by noting that to its credit WFP was the first organization in the United Nations system to form a joint working group between management and its governing body to tackle issues of harassment and abuse.

Statistical report on international professional staff and higher categories at 31 December 2018 *(for information)*

278. The annual report on the gender and nationality of WFP professional and higher staff, usually distributed for information only, was at the Board's request presented for discussion at the current session. Management confirmed that WFP operated in line with the rules of the United Nations General Assembly and viewed geographical representation as a fundamental principle. As a voluntarily-funded agency WFP was not obliged to apply quotas; it did, however, track and monitor geographical representation, which it considered alongside gender and other elements of diversity in its recruitment, reassignment and promotion processes, making efforts to address any imbalances.
279. Board members expressed concern regarding geographical representation among staff members P-5 and above. For example, List D accounted for two thirds of D1 and D2 posts and for more professional posts overall than Lists A, B and C combined. Members urged management to increase the representation of countries in Lists A, B and C in its high-level staff. In addition, some members observed that while recruitment processes were very long, announcements of vacant positions seemed to be posted only shortly before the deadlines for applications.

280. Directing members to the 2004 policy on staff recruitment and geographical representation for more details on WFP's approach to pursuing geographical representation, management confirmed that the donors of earmarked contributions did not impose conditions regarding the number of positions to be filled by nationals of specific countries. The only exception to this applied to junior professional officers, who were usually the nationals of the countries sponsoring their posts. The Executive Director added that both geographical and gender balance in high-level positions were likely to improve over time as people currently filling lower-level professional positions obtained the necessary experience and expertise to move to higher levels.

Other business

Oral update on the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service *(for information)*

281. The Chief of the Aviation Service updated the Board on the activities of UNHAS. During the first five months of 2019, UNHAS had performed more than 21,500 flights, transporting passengers from 700 organizations to over 300 destinations across 16 operations. The current fleet had 63 aircraft, with a further 36 kept on standby at no additional cost in order to support operational flexibility.
282. In each country of operation, UNHAS was jointly managed by the entire humanitarian community through two governance bodies: a steering committee comprising representatives of United Nations agencies, NGOs and the donor community; and a user group committee, through which all eligible registered user organizations provided feedback on the quality of the service and determined demand for services.
283. UNHAS was funded by voluntary contributions from donor governments – representing on average 80 percent of funding – and cost recovery revenue generated through nominal ticket fees. National and international NGOs accounted for 52 percent of passengers, the United Nations for 42 percent, donors and diplomats for 3 percent and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society for 2 percent.
284. A lack of timely and predictable funding represented a challenge to the service, which faced a shortfall of USD 41 million for 2019. Multi-year funding would enable UNHAS to negotiate better rates and make efficiency gains.
285. In response to the update, one member requested more transparent and timely financial information on UNHAS at the headquarters and country levels, saying that that would allow donors to strengthen their support for the vital service. She welcomed WFP's efforts to draft indicators for monitoring the performance of UNHAS and suggested that the Office of Evaluation could include evaluations of the service in its workplan.

Summary of the work of the Executive Board

2019/EB.A/35 Summary of the work of the 2019 first regular session of the Executive Board *(for approval)*

286. The President reported that the rapporteur for the 2019 first regular session had prepared the summary of that session, a draft of which had been distributed to Board members in May 2019. The Board approved the summary without change.

Verification of adopted decisions and recommendations

287. The Rapporteur confirmed that the decisions and recommendations presented in the draft compiled of decisions and recommendations adopted by the Board at the current session corresponded to those that had been agreed during the session. The final version would be posted on the Board's website within one working day of the conclusion of the session.

Farewell to Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO

288. The President welcomed the Director-General of FAO, Mr José Graziano da Silva, on the eve of his retirement. The Executive Director then paid tribute to the Director-General, thanking him for his guidance and support and saying that their relationship went beyond the cooperation needed to do their jobs and was indeed a friendship that had made possible the productive partnership that they had enjoyed. He spoke fondly of the field visits that the heads of FAO, IFAD and WFP had shared, saying that they had been an especially fruitful basis for down-to-earth discussions of the ways in which FAO and WFP could collaborate effectively. He expressed the hope that the humanitarian community would continue to benefit from the experience and wisdom of the outgoing Director-General.
289. Mr Graziano da Silva said he agreed that good personal chemistry was an essential feature of leadership and that contact at the field level was often more effective than meetings at headquarters, where tensions and disputes could arise. Field visits enabled senior leaders and administrators to observe actual operations and hence to appreciate the dedication of field staff as they handled the many challenges that arose, a positive experience that made office-based work seem remote and that often led the way to internal improvements in the two agencies. Observing that the concept of food assistance had shifted towards concern with malnutrition and related challenges such as obesity, he said that the work of WFP and the Rome-based agencies was changing accordingly.
290. The Director-General thanked the Executive Director and WFP for their support over the years, saying that he looked forward to working with WFP and its United Nations partners in the future.
291. Board members expressed appreciation for the work of the Director-General, whose tenure had seen numerous improvements at FAO, and for his skill in handling such a major organization. His commitment to supporting the world's poor and hungry people was enormously appreciated.

ANNEX I**Decisions and recommendations**

The decisions and recommendations in the current report will be implemented by the Secretariat in the light of the Board's deliberations, from which the main comments will be reflected in the summary of the work of the session.

Adoption of the agenda

The Board adopted the agenda for its 2019 annual session.

10 June 2019

Appointment of the Rapporteur

In accordance with Rule XII of its Rules of Procedure, the Board appointed Her Excellency María Cristina Boldorini (Argentina, List C) Rapporteur for its 2019 annual session.

10 June 2019

Current and future strategic issues

2019/EB.A/1

Opening remarks by the Executive Director

The Board took note of the opening remarks by the Executive Director. The main points of the Executive Director and the Board's comments would be reflected in the summary of the work of the session.

10 June 2019

Annual reports

2019/EB.A/2

Annual performance report for 2018

The Board approved the annual performance report for 2018 (WFP/EB.A/2019/4-A/Rev.2), noting that it provided a comprehensive record of WFP performance for the year. In accordance with General Regulation VI.3, and pursuant to its decisions 2000/EB.A/2 and 2004/EB.A/11, to resolution E/2013/L.17 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and to the decision adopted by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its 148th session in 2013, the Board requested that the annual performance report for 2018 be forwarded to the Economic and Social Council and the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization, along with the present decision and the Board's decisions and recommendations for 2018.

The Board looked forward to reporting against the targets set in the Corporate Results Framework Part II in next year's annual performance report and encouraged WFP to continue to improve the quality of the data used to report on its work.

10 June 2019

2019/EB.A/3

Annual report of the Ethics Office for 2018

The Board took note of the annual report of the Ethics Office for 2018 (WFP/EB.A/2019/4-B). The Board encouraged management to provide, to the extent available, the necessary resources to the Ethics Office to fulfill its mandate.

11 June 2019

2019/EB.A/4 **Annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services for 2018 and management response**

The Board took note of the annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services for 2018 (WFP/EB.A/2019/4-C). The Board encouraged management to provide, to the extent available, the necessary resources to the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services to fulfill its mandate.

11 June 2019

Policy issues

2019/EB.A/5 **Revised Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021) – Part II: 2021 targets for the programmatic outputs and performance indicators**

Having considered the proposed Part II of the Revised Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021) the Board:

- approved the annual targets up to 2021 for selected programmatic output indicators and all management performance indicators from the revised Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021);
- approved targets up to 2021 for selected category II indicators from the Management Plan (2019–2021); and
- acknowledged that annual changes to these targets would be included for Board approval in the management plan and that actual achievements would be reported in the annual performance report.

The Board requested management that the next corporate results framework from 2022 include output and outcome targets. The Board noted that the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021) would begin in 2019 and requested management to use this to consider how the theory of change approach could guide the development of outcome targets in WFP's next strategic plan.

13 June 2019

2019/EB.A/6 **Update on the implementation of the 2018 Enterprise Risk Management Policy and WFP's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Action Plan (2018–2020)**

The Board took note of the update on the implementation of the 2018 Enterprise Risk Management Policy and WFP's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Action Plan (2018–2020) (WFP/EB.A/2019/5-C).

13 June 2019

2019/EB.A/7 **Update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response**

The Board took note of the update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response (WFP/EB.A/2019/5-D/Rev.1).

13 June 2019

- 2019/EB.A/8 **Update on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 (repositioning the United Nations development system)**
- The Board emphasized that it remained committed to formulating and implementing joint working methods unless they were, due to the operational mandate of WFP, its institutional set-up or its Rome-based context (e.g. the Rome-based agency calendar, Rome-based agency collaboration), not applicable or relevant for WFP.
- 13 June 2019*
- Resource, financial and budgetary matters**
- 2019/EB.A/9 **Audited annual accounts for 2018**
- The Board:
- i) approved the 2018 annual financial statements of WFP, together with the report of the External Auditor, pursuant to General Regulation XIV.6 (b);
 - ii) noted the funding from the General Fund of USD 705,262 during 2018 for the write-off of receivables; and
 - iii) noted losses of commodities during 2018 forming part of operating expenses for the same period.
- The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K/2) and the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)/3).
- 12 June 2019*
- 2019/EB.A/10 **Update on the WFP Management Plan (2019–2021)**
- The Board approved the update on the WFP Management Plan (2019–2021) (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-B/1).
- The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K/2) and the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)/3).
- 11 June 2019*
- 2019/EB.A/11 **Annual report of the Audit Committee**
- The Board took note of the annual report of the Audit Committee (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-C/1).
- The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K/2) and the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)/3).
- 13 June 2019*

- 2019/EB.A/12 **Annual report of the Inspector General and note by the Executive Director**
- The Board took note of the annual report of the Inspector General (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-D/1) and noted that based on the risk-based oversight work performed and reported in 2018 no material weaknesses had been identified in the governance, risk management or control processes in place across WFP that would seriously compromise the overall achievement of WFP's strategic and operational objectives.
- The Board encouraged management to take advantage of the opportunities for improvement highlighted in the report.
- The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K/2) and the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)/3).
- 12 June 2019*
- 2019/EB.A/13 **Report of the External Auditor on country portfolio budgets and WFP management response to the recommendations**
- The Board took note of the report of the External Auditor on country portfolio budgets (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-E/1) and management response (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-E/1/Add.1) and encouraged further action on the recommendations of the External Auditor, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.
- The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K/2) and the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)/3).
- 12 June 2019*
- 2019/EB.A/14 **Report of the External Auditor on fraud prevention, detection and response and WFP management response to the recommendations**
- The Board took note of the report of the External Auditor on fraud prevention, detection and response (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-F/1) and management response (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-F/1/Add.1) and encouraged further action on the recommendations of the External Auditor, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.
- The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K/2) and the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)/3).
- 12 June 2019*
- 2019/EB.A/15 **Report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations**
- The Board took note of the report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-G/1).
- The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K/2) and the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)/3).
- 12 June 2019*

- 2019/EB.A/16 **Report on the utilization of WFP's advance financing mechanisms during the period 1 January–31 December 2018**
- The Board took note of the report on the utilization of WFP's advance financing mechanisms during the period 1 January–31 December 2018 (WFP/EB.A/2019/6-H/1) and approved an increase in the ceiling of the Global Commodity Management Facility from USD 500 million to USD 560 million.
- The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K/2) and the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WFP/EB.A/2019/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I)/3).
- 12 June 2019*

Evaluation reports

- 2019/EB.A/17 **Annual evaluation report for 2018 and management response**
- The Board took note of the annual evaluation report for 2018 (WFP/EB.A/2019/7-A) and management response (WFP/EB.A/2019/7-A/Add.1) and encouraged further action, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.
- 12 June 2019*
- 2019/EB.A/18 **Summary report on the evaluation of the update of WFP's safety nets policy (2012) and management response**
- The Board took note of the summary report on the evaluation of the update of WFP's safety nets policy (2012) (WFP/EB.A/2019/7-B) and management response (WFP/EB.A/2019/7-B/Add.1) and encouraged further action on the recommendations, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.
- 12 June 2019*
- 2019/EB.A/19 **Synthesis report of WFP's country portfolio evaluations in Africa (2016–2018) and management response**
- The Board took note of the synthesis report of WFP's country portfolio evaluations in Africa (2016–2018) (WFP/EB.A/2019/7-C) and management response (WFP/EB.A/2019/7-C/Add.1) and encouraged further action on the recommendations, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.
- 12 June 2019*
- 2019/EB.A/20 **Implementation status of evaluation recommendations**
- The Board took note of the document entitled "Implementation status of evaluation recommendations" (WFP/EB.A/2019/7-D).
- 12 June 2019*

Southern Africa portfolio

- 2019/EB.A/21 **Country strategic plan – Lesotho (2019–2024)**
The Board approved the Lesotho country strategic plan (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/5) at a total cost to WFP of USD 110,748,948.
10 June 2019
- 2019/EB.A/22 **Country strategic plan – Madagascar (2019–2024)**
The Board approved the Madagascar country strategic plan (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/7) at a total cost to WFP of USD 297,424,041.
10 June 2019
- 2019/EB.A/23 **Country strategic plan – Zambia (2019–2024)**
The Board approved the Zambia country strategic plan (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/12) at a total cost to WFP of USD 76,169,057.
10 June 2019

Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia portfolio

- 2019/EB.A/24 **Interim country strategic plan – Algeria (2019–2022)**
The Board approved the Algeria interim country strategic plan (2019–2022) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-B/1/Rev.1) at a total cost to WFP of USD 58,965,759.
11 June 2019
- 2019/EB.A/25 **Country strategic plan – Armenia (2019–2024)**
The Board approved the Armenia country strategic plan (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/1) at a total cost to WFP of USD 27,928,197.
11 June 2019
- 2019/EB.A/26 **Country strategic plan – Morocco (2019–2021)**
The Board approved the Morocco country strategic plan (2019–2021) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/8/Rev.1) at a total cost to WFP of USD 400,000.
11 June 2019
- 2019/EB.A/27 **Country strategic plan – Tajikistan (2019–2024)**
The Board approved the Tajikistan country strategic plan (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/10) at a total cost to WFP of USD 82,036,882.
11 June 2019

Asia and the Pacific portfolio**2019/EB.A/28 Interim multi-country strategic plan – Pacific (2019–2022)**

The Board:

- i) approved the Pacific interim multi-country strategic plan (2019–2022) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-B/3) at a total cost to WFP of USD 12,925,215; and
- ii) taking note of the prefatory note in document WFP/EB.A/2019/8-B/3, decided that in the application of the General Rules and Financial Regulations of WFP for the purposes of the implementation of the Pacific interim multi-country strategic plan (2019–2022) the phrase “Interim Country Strategic Plan” would be understood to refer to the Pacific interim multi-country strategic plan (2019–2022) and the word “country” would be understood to refer to the several countries and territories covered by the Pacific interim multi-country strategic plan.

13 June 2019

Latin America and the Caribbean portfolio**2019/EB.A/29 Country strategic plan – Haiti (2019–2023)**

The Board approved the Haiti country strategic plan (2019–2023) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/4) at a total cost to WFP of USD 199,155,529.

13 June 2019

West Africa portfolio**2019/EB.A/30 Country strategic plan – Benin (2019–2023)**

The Board approved the Benin country strategic plan (2019–2023) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/2) at a total cost to WFP of USD 129,476,091.

14 June 2019

2019/EB.A/31 Country strategic plan – Guinea-Bissau (2019–2024)

The Board approved the Guinea-Bissau country strategic plan (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/3) at a total cost to WFP of USD 61,610,662.

14 June 2019

2019/EB.A/32 Country strategic plan – Liberia (2019–2023)

The Board approved the Liberia country strategic plan (2019–2023) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/6) at a total cost to WFP of USD 50,169,116.

14 June 2019

2019/EB.A/33 Country strategic plan – Sao Tome and Principe (2019–2024)

The Board approved the Sao Tome and Principe country strategic plan (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/9) at a total cost to WFP of USD 1,588,903.

14 June 2019

2019/EB.A/34

Interim country strategic plan – Guinea (2019–2022)

The Board approved the Guinea interim country strategic plan (2019–2022) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-B/2) at a total cost to WFP of USD 40,302,571.

*14 June 2019***Summary of the work of the Executive Board**

2019/EB.A/35

Summary of the work of the 2019 first regular session of the Executive Board

The Board approved the draft summary of the work of its 2019 first regular session, the final version of which would be embodied in document WFP/EB.1/2019/14.

14 June 2019

ANNEX II**Agenda**

1. **Adoption of the agenda** (*for approval*)
2. **Appointment of the Rapporteur**
3. **Opening remarks by the Executive Director**
Statement by His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho
4. **Annual reports**
 - a) Annual performance report for 2018 (*for approval*)
 - b) Annual report of the Ethics Office for 2018 (*for consideration*)
 - c) Annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services for 2018 and management note (*for consideration*)
5. **Policy issues**
 - a) Revised Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021) – Part II: 2021 targets for the programmatic outputs and performance indicators (*for approval*)
 - b) Revised charter of the Office of the Inspector General (*for approval*) – POSTPONED TO THE 2019 SECOND REGULAR SESSION
 - c) Update on the implementation of the 2018 Enterprise Risk Management Policy and WFP's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Action Plan (2018–2020) (*for consideration*)
 - d) Update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response (*for consideration*)
 - e) Update on the gender policy (2015–2020) (*for information*)*
 - f) Update on WFP's response to HIV and AIDS (*for information*)
 - g) Update on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 (repositioning the United Nations development system) (*for information*)*
6. **Resource, financial and budgetary matters**
 - a) Audited annual accounts, 2018 (*for approval*)
 - b) Update on the WFP Management Plan (2019–2021) (*for approval*)
 - c) Annual report of the Audit Committee (*for consideration*)
 - d) Annual report of the Inspector General (*for consideration*) and note by the Executive Director (*for consideration*)
 - e) Report of the External Auditor on country portfolio budgets (*for consideration*) and WFP management response to the recommendations (*for consideration*)
 - f) Report of the External Auditor on fraud prevention, detection and response (*for consideration*) and WFP management response to the recommendations (*for consideration*)
 - g) Report on the implementation of the External Auditor recommendations (*for consideration*)
 - h) Report on the utilization of WFP's advance financing mechanisms during the period 1 January–31 December 2018 (*for approval*)

* To be discussed at the session.

- i) Report of the Executive Director on contributions in the form of commodities or services and on reductions or waivers of costs (General Rule XIII.4 (h)) (*for information*)
7. **Evaluation reports** (*for consideration*)
- a) Annual evaluation report for 2018 and management response
 - b) Summary report on the evaluation of the update of WFP's safety nets policy (2012) and management response
 - c) Synthesis report of WFP's country portfolio evaluations in Africa (2016–2018) and management response
 - d) Implementation status of evaluation recommendations
8. **Operational matters**
- a) Country strategic plans (*for approval*)
 - 1) Armenia (2019–2024)
 - 2) Benin (2019–2023)
 - 3) Guinea-Bissau (2019–2024)
 - 4) Haiti (2019–2023)
 - 5) Lesotho (2019–2024)
 - 6) Liberia (2019–2023)
 - 7) Madagascar (2019–2024)
 - 8) Morocco (2019–2021)
 - 9) Sao Tome and Principe (2019–2024)
 - 10) Tajikistan (2019–2024)
 - 11) Togo (2019–2023) – POSTPONED TO THE 2019 SECOND REGULAR SESSION
 - 12) Zambia (2019–2024)
 - b) Interim country strategic plans (*for approval*)
 - 1) Algeria (2019–2022)
 - 2) Guinea (2019–2022)
 - 3) Pacific interim multi-country strategic plan (2019–2022)
 - c) Projects approved by correspondence (*for information*)
 - 1) Budget revisions and extensions in time of transitional interim country strategic plans
 - 1) Iraq
 - 2) Mali
 - d) Crisis response revisions of country strategic plans and corresponding budget increases submitted to the Board for comments (*for information*)
 - 1) Colombia
 - 2) Eswatini

9. **Organizational and procedural matters**
 - a) Biennial programme of work of the Executive Board (2019–2020) (*for information*)
10. **Administrative and managerial matters**
 - a) Oral update on harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination (*for consideration*)
 - b) Address by staff representative bodies to the Board
 - c) Report on global losses for the period 1 January–31 December 2018 (*for information*)
 - d) Update on food procurement (*for information*)
 - e) Statistical report on international professional staff and higher categories at 31 December 2018 (*for information*)*
 - f) Security report (*for information*)
11. **Summary of the work of the 2019 first regular session of the Executive Board**
(*for approval*)
12. **Other business**
 - a) Oral report on the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP (*for information*)
 - b) Oral report on the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP (*for information*)
 - c) Oral update on United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (*for information*)
 - d) Oral update on WFP operations in Yemen
13. **Verification of adopted decisions and recommendations**

Acronyms used in the document

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
AFAC	anti-fraud and anti-corruption
CBTs	cash-based transfers
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCMF	Global Commodity Management Facility
HSHAPD	harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SEA	sexual exploitation and abuse
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization