



**Draft decision\***

The Board takes note of the mid-term review of the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) (WFP/EB.A/2020/5-A/Rev.2).

The Board:

- welcomes the recognition that “corporate result pathways” or “theories of change” would help WFP and the Executive Board in decision making, evaluation and performance management; and
- requests management to set out a consultation process during 2021 for members to discuss and agree the approach, including the theory of change, to be used in WFP’s Strategic Plan 2022–2026.

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\* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

## Methodology and scope of the mid-term review

1. The mid-term review (MTR) of the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) began in September 2019. It was conducted under the guidance of the Assistant Executive Director for Programme and Policy Development and in close collaboration with relevant WFP divisions.
2. The MTR covers the first three years of the strategic plan implementation and provides a retrospective analysis of WFP's strategy in relation to the organization's performance and global changes that have implications for the organization's work, with forward-looking recommendations to inform implementation during the current strategic plan and towards the next one.
3. The methodology includes a review of secondary data, such as evaluations, audit reports, annual performance reports, policies, studies and guidance material issued by WFP since 2017, and interviews with key informants.
4. To ensure the most recent learning and findings were captured, the MTR made use of the preliminary findings from the latest country strategic plans<sup>1</sup> (CSPs) and policy and strategic evaluations<sup>2</sup> as well as from the 2019 Annual Performance Report, which will be presented at the annual session of the Executive Board in June 2020. Additionally, the MTR drew data and information from WFP's internal working papers and reviews.<sup>3</sup>
5. Interviews with key informants included WFP regional directors, selected country directors, division directors, unit chiefs, the WFP Office of Evaluation and WFP's Rome-based agencies (RBA). Contributions from external partners included a consultation with cooperating partners;<sup>4</sup> discussions with the Executive Board (EB) electoral lists followed by an oral presentation to the EB in February 2020 and informal consultations in March and May 2020; inputs from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on their respective MTRs.
6. The MTR included a review of global trends affecting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 and requiring renewed efforts to accelerate progress, thus influencing WFP's work.
7. Similarly, the MTR examined the coherence between the WFP Strategic Plan and the overarching goals of the United Nations reform, the strategic direction of the Rome-based and other United Nations agencies, seeking to assess whether the strategic plan created the cross-sectoral synergies needed to deliver transformative results. The MTR also looked at how the strategic plan, the CSP approach and the United Nations reform can be mutually supportive while fulfilling the organization's mandate and Member State expectations.
8. Throughout the review, an ad hoc WFP internal reference group provided strategic and technical inputs to the mid-term review team.
9. Findings and recommendations from the review will inform the remaining two years of the current strategic plan and contribute to the development of the next strategic plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Timor-Leste, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Cameroon, Bangladesh.

<sup>2</sup> Gender Policy, Funding WFP's work.

<sup>3</sup> First-generation country strategic plans and interim country strategic plans (ICSPs) carried out by the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division; APR 2018 Lessons learned, internal document, June 2019; R2R Status Report.

<sup>4</sup> Annual Partnership Consultation held in November 2019.

## Current global context

10. In 2015, the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the aim of securing a better future for all and the promise to leave no one behind. Four years on, progress has been made in several areas, but the speed and scale of change remains insufficient to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations Secretary-General has called on all sectors of society to embark upon a decade of action to accelerate efforts, find sustainable solutions to the world's biggest challenges and generate the transformation required to achieve the SDGs by 2030.
11. While the global prevalence of **undernourishment** has stabilized at around 11 percent, the absolute number of undernourished people grew from 811.7 million in 2017 to 821.6 million in 2018, showing the immense challenge of achieving zero hunger by 2030. According to a 2019 report on food insecurity and nutrition around the world,<sup>5</sup> undernourishment has been increasing as a result of trends such as economic slowdown, conflict and extreme climate events.
12. More than 80 percent of countries that experienced a rise in undernourishment between 2011 and 2017 also suffered an **economic slowdown** – many of them middle-income countries.<sup>6</sup> However, malnutrition has its own economic cost. In Africa and Asia, estimates show that undernutrition reduces gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 11 percent.
13. Unsustainable debt levels in already fragile situations threaten countries' ability to move out of crisis.<sup>7</sup> Debt levels have risen rapidly in recent years. In 2019, the global debt-to-GDP ratio reached a record high of 322 percent. The World Bank has warned that such huge worldwide debt poses risks for the **global economy**.
14. The latest World Economic Forum report<sup>8</sup> indicates that the global economy is facing a greater risk of stagnation and that **climate change** is "striking harder and more rapidly than expected". The United Nations Secretary-General warned that a "point of no-return" on climate change was "in sight and hurtling toward us".
15. In recent years, we have witnessed record high temperatures, unprecedented extreme weather and more intense and frequent natural disasters across all continents. Environmental concerns<sup>9</sup> dominate the top risks identified by members of the World Economic Forum's multi-stakeholder community in 2020, reflecting the impact climate change can have on social, political, economic and human dimensions.
16. Climate change is a global phenomenon, but its impact is unevenly distributed across countries and social groups. It is threatening livelihoods, increasing vulnerability and

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<sup>5</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP and World Health Organization. 2019. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/55921/file/SOFI-2019-full-report.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2020. *Global Humanitarian Overview 2020*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2020-enarfrzh>.

<sup>8</sup> World Economic Forum. 2020. *Global Risks Report 2020*. [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Risk\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risk_Report_2020.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation; loss of biodiversity; and extreme weather.

- resulting in displacement. In 2018, around 17.2 million people were newly displaced as a result of natural disasters.<sup>10</sup>
17. Furthermore, food crises attributed to climate shocks affected 124 million people in 51 countries in 2017. As climate change is eroding the resilience of rural people and alternative rural livelihoods are not available, **migration** is becoming one of the main drivers of population change and **urbanization** in some countries. Already today 55 percent of the world's population lives in cities. The number of international migrants worldwide was nearly 272 million in 2019, up from 221 million in 2010 and 174 million in 2000.<sup>11</sup>
  18. In 2018, **conflict** continued to be the one of the biggest drivers of food crises, affecting around 74 million people.<sup>12</sup> The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that in 2019 the number of highly violent conflicts had risen for the first time in four years with more than 70 million people in situations of forced displacement. More than 41 million were internally displaced, prompting the United Nations Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel on internal displacement to draw attention to the phenomenon and discuss durable solutions.
  19. Financial and **digital inclusion** can create job opportunities, increase productivity and reduce poverty. The “fourth industrial revolution” – the fusion of technologies across the physical, digital and biological spheres – offers new promises through avenues such as artificial intelligence.<sup>13</sup>
  20. Since early 2020, a global pandemic, **COVID-19**, has been affecting populations in more than 200 countries.<sup>14</sup> It has affected several of the world's largest economies and strained the capacities of the health sector in many countries. Measures to contain the spreading of COVID-19 are having a devastating impact on the economies and on people's livelihoods. Moreover, early estimates indicate the likelihood that the pandemic will prompt a global recession, which risks doubling the number of people facing acute hunger while challenging mitigation and response measures. In addition to highlighting the need for more investment to prepare for, mitigate and manage potential future pandemic outbreaks, the pandemic is expected to catalyse new ways of working, for instance by leveraging digital technology to support remote working. It also highlights the urgency to address underlying inequities that risk multiplying and prolonging suffering among the world's most vulnerable people.
  21. To address these challenges, the 2030 Agenda is more relevant than ever, yet requires significant funding, leapfrogging strategies that integrate humanitarian, development,

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<sup>10</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2019. *Trends in International Migration Stock 2019*. <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp>.

<sup>12</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP and World Health Organization. 2019. *The State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/55921/file/SOFI-2019-full-report.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations. 2019. *Foundational Primer on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://unsdg.un.org/SDGPrimer>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> accessed 8 April. 'Countries' includes countries, areas and territories.

peace and stability objectives. Current official development assistance is still below the commitment of 0.7 percent of gross national income.<sup>15</sup>

22. The World Bank's approach to maximizing financing for development is to bring together all possible sources of financing, expertise and solutions to support the sustainable growth of developing countries.
23. Acknowledging these challenges, the 2020 session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council<sup>16</sup> will focus on financing.

## External institutional engagement

24. In 2018, the United Nations Security Council recognized the clear links between food insecurity and conflict and the importance of food security as a fundamental building block for the sustainable development of any nation.<sup>17</sup>
25. Considering WFP's presence in countries affected by conflict, fragility and violence, a partnership with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) was established to assess whether WFP's programming has positive or unwanted effects on the prospects for peace. Findings<sup>18</sup> highlighted that WFP should explicitly consider conflict risks and peacebuilding opportunities to offer programming solutions that address and reduce causes of inequality.
26. In February 2019, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) senior level meeting adopted recommendations to strengthen the coherence across the humanitarian–development–peace space to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities. This requires approaches that "prioritize prevention always, development whenever possible, humanitarian action when necessary".<sup>19</sup> Efforts to meet immediate humanitarian needs should be accompanied by investment in development. Complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions should be pursued in fragile and conflict-affected situations.
27. The United Nations General Assembly resolution on repositioning the United Nations Development System (UNDS)<sup>20</sup> promotes a whole-of-system approach to achieving transformative outcomes that end needs. Common goals, complementarity among agencies and strategic partnerships are being pursued at country level through the new United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF). The Common Chapter will be evaluated in January 2021 offering additional learning on the new way of working embedded in the United Nations reform.
28. WFP has systematically sought to strengthen collaboration, coherence and complementarity with its partners across the humanitarian and development sectors. The roll-out of the

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<sup>15</sup> The percentage of gross national income spent on official development assistance (ODA) by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members remained at about 0.31 percent in 2018.

<sup>16</sup> The theme for the 2020 session is "Accelerated actions and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development".

<sup>17</sup> Resolution 2417 of 24 May 2018. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1627380>.

<sup>18</sup> The World Food Programme's Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace, June 2019 <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2019/other-publications/world-food-programmes-contribution-improving-prospects-peace>.

<sup>19</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2020. *DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*. OECD/LEGAL/5019. <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 (A/Res/72/279).

- UNSDCF coincides with the conclusion of the first generation of WFP CSPs. Ongoing evaluations and reviews of these CSPs are providing useful inputs for the design of new country strategies.
29. A 2019 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) case study on field-level collaboration between the RBAs<sup>21</sup> identified a significant amount of country-level collaboration with great potential for further expansion. It suggested RBAs to consider further complementarity of their country strategies and better alignment of business processes and planning cycles to enhance collaboration between agencies and donors.
  30. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in June 2018 committed the three RBAs to working towards collective SDG 2 outcomes aligned with national priorities. This resulted in country joint action plans based on hunger gaps analysis and localized SDG 2 solutions. The RBAs' partnership on resilience building is present in over 70 countries.
  31. WFP and UNICEF have committed to enhance programme efficiency, quality and impact by working more closely together. WFP and UNICEF also agreed to work together on shock-responsive safety net systems, coordinated support to governments and durable solutions for communities.
  32. The use of cash transfers in emergency continues to grow. In 2018, WFP signed a commitment with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF and OCHA to develop common, inclusive, cash systems.<sup>22</sup> UNHCR and WFP have committed to develop joint targeting principles, foster refugee and host populations' self-reliance, enhance data sharing and systems interoperability. To operationalize these commitments and capitalize on respective expertise, UNHCR and WFP launched a Joint Targeting and Programme Excellence Hub in early 2020.
  33. WFP plays a strong role in the humanitarian response through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its cluster coordination work. While WFP co-chairs with FAO the global food security cluster, it also provides leadership in the global logistics cluster and in the emergency telecommunications cluster. WFP continues to manage the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service thus providing vital services in emergency operations.
  34. WFP and the United Nations Population Fund co-chaired the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Capacity Steering Committee, to foster efficiency and increase synergies between Gender Capacity and Protection Capacity initiatives.
  35. WFP continues to work with RBAs and other United Nations agencies on the various components of UNDS reform,<sup>23</sup> and to co-chair with UNHCR the Business Innovations Group.
  36. WFP's engagement with the International Financial Institutions has largely grown and focuses on national governments' priority areas such as digital transformation and jobs for youth, insurance financing, food systems, climate adaptation and disaster preparedness, and human capital development. WFP sees the World Bank as a key partner to support governments to address bottlenecks in value chains and to make food systems more

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<sup>21</sup> The case study reviewed programmes in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Jordan and Madagascar.

<sup>22</sup> In particular, a statement by the principals of OCHA, UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF on "cash assistance" and an associated addendum on cash and data sharing. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/statement-principals-ocha-unhcr-wfp-and-unicef-cash-assistance>.

<sup>23</sup> Namely the mutual recognition principle; common and shared premises; a global facility for transport services; and the online humanitarian booking hub.

resilient and inclusive particularly for smallholder farmers. Similarly, WFP is also working with the African Development Bank (AfDB) on rural transformation and sustainable infrastructure. WFP's "last mile" focus well complements the AfDB's upstream focus. In January 2020, WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Islamic Development Bank and has started to build partnerships with the Asian Development Bank and Inter-American Development Bank.

## WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) and Corporate Results Framework

37. The strategic plan is part of the WFP's Integrated Road Map (IRM), an ambitious and transformative package<sup>24</sup> designed to transform WFP's ability to help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The IRM featured in the 2018 "Financing the UN Development System: Opening Doors" report<sup>25</sup> as an example of good practice by providing WFP a systematic approach to linking the strategic plans and its corporate results frameworks to the SDGs.
38. WFP was the first agency to align its strategic plan with the 2030 Agenda. Focusing on ending hunger (SDG 2) and partnering to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 17), the strategic plan embeds components of the two SDGs providing a coherent vision for WFP until 2030. These components were selected in line with WFP's mandate and comparative advantage to support the achievement of SDG 2 in countries with significant levels of food insecurity.

Figure 1: WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) results framework



39. Progress towards SDG 2 is the primary focus of the strategic plan. It highlights that the achievement of SDG 2 "is [also] dependent on progress made in other SDGs". The strategic plan shows how WFP's work will contribute to the achievement of several other

<sup>24</sup> It includes the Strategic Plan (2017–2021), the new financial framework, a new country strategy plan policy and a corporate results framework encompassing programmatic and management performance.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations. 2018. *Financing the UN Development System: Opening Doors*. [https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/financial-instr-report-2018-interactive-pdf\\_pj.pdf](https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/financial-instr-report-2018-interactive-pdf_pj.pdf).

- SDGs and its second strategic goal (SDG 17) aims to “guide WFP’s participation in a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development”.
40. MOPAN assessments of WFP undertaken in 2017 and 2018<sup>26</sup> recognized that WFP had made significant efforts to align its activities with the 2030 Agenda, noting that WFP had articulated a clear and cohesive long-term vision solidly anchored in SDGs 2 and 17.
  41. By selecting SDG 17 as its second strategic goal, WFP highlights the critical role of partnerships in achieving results that contribute to the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, WFP Strategic Goal 2 has allowed the organization to profile its important work on common services and platforms.
  42. In recent years, WFP has been leveraging opportunities for public–private partnerships to enhance its contribution to the achievement of SDG 2. These partnerships have focused on recognized areas of expertise in WFP such as supply chain, food security analysis, and digital technologies (See Annex I: Partnership on real-time hunger data.)
  43. UNDS entities recognize that achieving interlinked, transformative results and promoting national ownership is their priority at country level. These priorities are reflected in the vision set out in the strategic plan and the CSP approach. Partnership is strategically pursued to facilitate and amplify WFP’s contribution across the humanitarian and development space confirming WFP’s position as a key player within the UNDS.
  44. An evaluation of the pilot CSPs<sup>27</sup> described the new approach as a significant step forward with the potential to strengthen long-term efforts to build resilience and tackle the root causes of vulnerability. CSPs are strongly grounded in national zero hunger strategic reviews enabling WFP to develop a long-term vision to support national priorities towards zero hunger.
  45. Acknowledging that the underlying causes of food insecurity, government capacities and priorities will vary from country to country, country offices are responsible for producing outputs that will contribute to the achievement of strategic outcomes. Each strategic outcome is directly linked with one strategic result. This is an important change in the architecture of the strategic plan’s conceptual framework.
  46. CSPs distinguish three focus areas – crisis response, resilience and root causes. The MTR understands that this categorization was introduced in order to ensure alignment with pre-existing governance and operations approval authorities. Therefore, activities aiming at achieving one strategic outcome and contributing to one strategic result but falling under different focus areas must be separated. Separate strategic outcomes are created for each focus area fragmenting the overall country strategy’s rationale.
  47. WFP has merged into a single framework the measurement of its programmatic and management performance. The 2017 and 2018 MOPAN assessments described WFP’s single framework as a strength and praised WFP’s commitment to delivering results at the country level.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/45a77ae8719b4b29bbb5660d2c4a6328/download/>;  
<http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/wfp2017-18/index.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> WFP. 2018. Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/evaluation-country-strategic-plan-pilots-terms-reference>.

48. A revised corporate results framework (CRF)<sup>28</sup> was adopted in 2019, including new indicators to measure WFP programmes' contribution to the 2030 Agenda. Through the line-of-sight, WFP aggregates indicators from country offices to report on the organization's performance. The country-level's results chain consists of 3 focus areas, 19 outcome categories, 14 output categories and 13 activity categories. These categories were designed to aggregate data across countries to report on WFP's overall performance. Senior managers who have had direct experience with the CRF perceive the results chain<sup>29</sup> as complex, creating a significant workload for country offices and adding limited value to operational decision making.
49. With the roll-out of UNSDCFs, WFP's monitoring tools and indicators may have to be revisited. Currently, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) play a major role in the food security, nutrition, agriculture and climate change outcome groups. Similarly, WFP and UNICEF work together in the social protection outcome group.

## Implementation, resources and results

50. Responding to emergencies and saving lives and livelihoods, directly and by strengthening country response capacities, remains the major part of WFP's operations. The strategic plan leverages WFP's strengths and capacities in humanitarian response and recovery and identifies opportunities to apply these in the continuum from emergency relief to development to achieve SDGs. In 2018, WFP reaffirmed that SDG 2 will not be achieved unless humanitarian and development issues are addressed collectively through an integrated approach. CSPs encompass humanitarian, resilience and development activities to assist beneficiaries in a way that reduces and ideally ends their needs.
51. The strategic plan states that WFP "will focus on aspects of development where food-based interventions are most appropriate". In 2020, only 5 percent of WFP's plan of work<sup>30</sup> is devoted to address food insecurity's root causes and 21 percent to build the resilience of households and communities.

### Implementation

52. The design of the first generation of CSPs was guided by a focus on SDG 2 and SDG 17. Country portfolios were expected to be transformative, supporting changes that contribute to national priorities.
53. An internal CSPs review by the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division found that most country offices had opted for conventional programmes and modest results, with limited focus on ensuring sustainable solutions. Interviews with senior WFP managers further revealed that the CSP design in some countries was influenced by the need to ensure continuity for activities under previously approved programming instruments as well as by their understanding of donor funding preferences and donor financing mechanisms. In highlighting challenges to introduce more transformative approaches, senior managers also flagged: short timeframe to adopt the CSP approach; challenges with the new financial framework; and insufficient programmatic guidance.
54. WFP's performance in support of SDG 2 was generally on track. By far the largest effort, over two-thirds of planned requirements, went into ensuring "access to food" in emergency

<sup>28</sup> WFP/EB.2/2018/5-B/Rev.1.

<sup>29</sup> Number of objectives, results, categories, dimensions and focus areas.

<sup>30</sup> Management Plan 2020 <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000108558/download/>.

- contexts. About 10 percent of the planned work aimed at “ending malnutrition” whereas some 6 percent focused on achieving food security through “smallholder productivity and incomes” and “sustainable food systems”.
55. The pandemic crisis in early 2020 demonstrated that progress towards SDG 2 also requires a strong capacity to respond to unexpected shocks, including adapting programmes to changed contexts and mitigating longer-term impact alongside immediate response. WFP and the entire United Nations system were called to support poorer countries to help meet immediate food, health and other social service needs of people with restricted movement and scale up support to protect jobs and livelihoods in their response to the COVID-19 crisis. Particularly at risk were vulnerable populations in urban areas, camps and in the informal sector. In the early weeks and months, governments were particularly keen to draw upon WFP knowledge and capabilities that assisted them to identify needs and target assistance, manage supply chain interruptions through procurement services or by providing immediate cash or food transfers to particularly vulnerable people, adapt school meals programmes where schools are closed and support school re-opening and modify national, social protection programmes to meet growing needs.
  56. WFP’s role as global service provider for the humanitarian and development system has also been key to the global effort to “stay and deliver”. This included co-leading, with WHO, the global health supply chain, the creation of global logistics hubs to provide upstream and downstream logistics services, arrangements for passenger and Medevac air services where commercial capacities did not exist and the setting up of field hospitals, where required.
  57. The use of cash-based transfers to enhance access to food has also significantly increased across WFP’s portfolio during the strategic plan time frame, from USD 880 million in 2016, when the strategic plan was approved, to USD 2.27 billion last year. To make cash-based transfers more efficient, secure and traceable, WFP’s Information Technology Division has been harnessing blockchain technology. The WFP Innovation Accelerator has been helping several country offices to adopt innovative ways of assisting beneficiaries. An example is the EMPACT initiative, which aims to build the digital skills of women and youth and link them with online microwork. (See Annex II: EMPACT.)
  58. Investing in the development of human capital such as through school feeding interventions combines improving nutrition and ending hunger. A partnership launched by WFP and UNICEF in January 2020 is a promising example of delivering health and nutrition packages at scale. (See Annex III: Partnership for human capital development).
  59. Climate-related interventions and resilience building activities were among WFP’s most prominent efforts towards “achieving food security”. Following the approval of WFP’s Climate Change Policy in 2017,<sup>31</sup> 58 country offices implemented climate-related activities including the use of climate risk insurance instruments, e.g. the Rural Resilience Initiative (R4) micro-insurance and Africa Risk Capacity Replica.
  60. As WFP aims to strengthen its pro-smallholder farmers approach the new local and regional food procurement policy<sup>32</sup> offers new intervention opportunities. Combining WFP’s regular assistance activities with local food procurement has proven potential to enhance local food systems and strengthen farmers’ livelihoods. (See Annex IV: The Farm to Market Alliance: a partnership to enhance food systems).

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<sup>31</sup> WFP/EB.1/2017/4-A/Rev.1\*.

<sup>32</sup> WFP/EB.2/2019/4-C.

61. As part of select crisis response operations, particularly protracted crises, WFP has been pursuing self-reliance opportunities, integrating resilience activities into the humanitarian response. This has been facilitated by operational partnerships among United Nations agencies, close collaboration with the private sector, combined support from donors' emergency and development arms, and national government buy-in. (See Annex V: Integrated approaches).
62. The review found that WFP's work in support of SDG 17 was under-leveraged. Few country offices articulated WFP roles beyond service provision and cluster activities. Some countries successfully engaged on country capacity strengthening but found it difficult to capture the impact on people's lives. WFP senior managers also suggested that country offices may not have fully understood the potential of WFP's role concerning SDG 17.
63. The present strong focus on emergency-related service delivery implies that WFP's work supporting SDG 17 is rather volatile. In fact, WFP's operational requirements under this strategic goal dropped by 37 percent between 2019 and 2020.<sup>33</sup>
64. The MTR finds that there is scope for WFP to go beyond service provision and more strongly engage in capacity building. The economic landscape in the countries where WFP has ongoing operations has been changing. More than 60 percent of WFP's operations are now in middle-income countries. Sharing knowledge, technology and expertise through South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) presents itself as more suitable to countries that are both recipients and providers of development assistance. Many country offices are already offering technical assistance to governments through SSTC across multiple sectors, e.g. social protection, food systems, climate adaptation, and in humanitarian contexts.
65. The review found a broad consensus, among WFP's external stakeholders and within WFP, that broader partnerships are essential to the achievement of WFP's Strategic Plan. Together with WFP's extensive field presence, partnerships can be leveraged to support the localization of SDGs.

## Resources

66. In 2019 WFP responded to – all time high – eleven Level 3 and seven Level 2 emergencies and received record high contributions of more than USD 8 billion. Around 80 percent of contributions were earmarked for humanitarian activities.
67. An internal audit of the IRM pilot phase<sup>34</sup> revealed that high levels of earmarking and the complexity of the budget structures constrained WFP's efforts to maximize operational effectiveness. Flexible funding is critical to respond timely to situations of acute need. The internal audit also showed that a lack of seed funding for more transformational interventions resulted in some country offices taking a conservative approach when formulating their CSPs.
68. The 2017–2018 MOPAN assessment noted that it was not yet certain that donors would reduce earmarking in response to the increased link between WFP's budget and its results. Interviewed senior WFP managers indicated a preference for higher-level earmarking, at the CSP or at strategic outcome level, which would provide country offices with the flexibility to use resources more efficiently and effectively. However, WFP's own systems and tools (such as the programme pipeline) may encourage activity-level earmarking of funding; for

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<sup>33</sup> Source WFP Management Plan.

<sup>34</sup> <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000070797/download/>.

instance, as it is normal practice by country offices to put forward funding proposals for specific underfunded components of CSP activities.

69. With multi-year planning, WFP seeks to attract more predictable, longer-term funding which will enable more effective, crisis response, programming in protracted crisis and recurrent crisis situations as well as facilitate outcomes aiming to build resilience and address root causes.
70. The timely provision of funds continues to pose a major challenge. Too often, country offices lack the money at the right time to buy and pre-position food, facilitate logistical arrangements and expand activities to achieve economies of scale.<sup>35</sup> Available internal advance financing mechanisms are good but insufficient, taking also into account that not all donors permit advances against their pledges. Unfortunately, in 2019, only a small percentage of contributions were multi-year, and about one third of all contributions were received during the last quarter.
71. WFP is experimenting with innovative financing, particularly in the area of climate risk by piloting forecast-based financing in 15 countries. Reliable forecasts inform the design of early actions which are funded and implemented before a climate shock, preventing the use of negative coping strategies by affected populations. Return-on-investment studies concluded that forecast-based financing can result in significant savings.<sup>36</sup>
72. Since 2017, by partnering with governments, WFP has accessed USD 90 million from multilateral climate funds.<sup>37</sup> As the accredited entity, WFP is the custodian of the funds.

## Results

73. In 2017 and 2018, WFP's performance<sup>38</sup> under Strategic Objective 1<sup>39</sup> was strong. Performance under Strategic Objective 2<sup>40</sup> was mixed, while under Strategic Objective 3,<sup>41</sup> WFP made progress in its work with smallholders, food systems and climate adaptation but did not fully meet the targets. Resilience building activities were often interrupted to respond to acute needs or due to lack of funding. Although it was acknowledged that WFP carried out important work under Strategic Objective 4<sup>42</sup> and Strategic Objective 5,<sup>43</sup> data was insufficient to assess performance.

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<sup>35</sup> Source: WFP. 2018. Annual Performance Report for 2018. WFP/EB.A/2019/4-A/Rev.2. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000104617/download/>.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/publications/forecast-based-financing-factsheet>.

<sup>37</sup> Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund.

<sup>38</sup> Source Annual Performance Report 2017 and Annual Performance Report 2018.

<sup>39</sup> End hunger by protecting access to food.

<sup>40</sup> Improve nutrition.

<sup>41</sup> Achieve food security.

<sup>42</sup> Support SDG implementation.

<sup>43</sup> Partner for SDG results.

74. In 2019, the revised CRF allowed WFP to report performance at strategic result level, but changes in the methodology<sup>44</sup> prevent comparison with previous years. The 2019 Annual Performance Report shows that WFP achieved<sup>45</sup> seven strategic results and only Strategic Result 3<sup>46</sup> did not meet the targets.<sup>47</sup>
75. The performance of each strategic result is an average across all CSPs and ICSPs implemented in 2019. Some strategic results are only pursued by a few country offices, e.g. Strategic Result 6, whereas China is the only country office working on Strategic Result 7.
76. The mid-term review examined eight<sup>48</sup> of the 29 CSPs where Strategic Result 5<sup>49</sup> plays a significant role. It emerged that, in some instances, WFP's contribution in establishing and running government-owned food security and safety net programmes resulted in reduced needs for WFP's direct food assistance. In a few countries the total number of benefitting people was estimated. This number exceeded the number of beneficiaries reported by WFP (which was simply the people trained through the capacity building activities).
77. The challenges of measuring WFP's contribution when providing technical support to national systems was identified in thematic evaluations and a review of the "linking resources to results" effort.<sup>50</sup> Insufficient programme guidance and the absence of a methodology for estimating and reporting on beneficiaries were cited as important obstacles by senior WFP managers interviewed by the MTR. In September 2019 WFP issued a guidance note on estimating and counting direct beneficiaries of the three main transfer modalities.<sup>51</sup> The MTR learned that methodologies for the estimation of indirect beneficiaries are being explored. These are important steps forward given WFP's growing role in capacity strengthening and ambition of linking resources to results.
78. An internal mid-term review of the CRF concluded that improvements are needed to fully report on WFP's results in areas such as capacity strengthening, resilience, social protection and partnership. Country offices operating in stable and middle-income contexts require these improvements the most. WFP staff believe that operations significantly contribute to poverty reduction and facilitate the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, but corporate systems are unable to measure it.
79. The scope for improving WFP's systems to capture progress towards the SDGs might best be illustrated by a report<sup>52</sup> on "equality and inclusion in education" which drew evaluative evidence from a range of agencies including UNICEF and WFP. It concluded that school feeding programmes have strong positive effects on primary school enrolment, thus providing strong result evidence on SDG 4, Target 5.

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<sup>44</sup> The thresholds have changed, weighting was applied for a same indicator used across different strategic outcome categories, results linked to strategic outcome categories selected by only one country are now reported.

<sup>45</sup> The indicator value has reached 80 percent of the annual target meaning that the country has achieved or is on track to achieving its target.

<sup>46</sup> Smallholders have improved food security and nutrition through improved productivity and incomes.

<sup>47</sup> The indicator value is between 50 percent and 80 percent of the annual target, i.e. progress is slow.

<sup>48</sup> Burundi, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, Peru, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

<sup>49</sup> Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs.

<sup>50</sup> TANGO International: Review of methodologies for linking resources to results, July 2019.

<sup>51</sup> In-kind assistance, cash transfers and capacity strengthening work.

<sup>52</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2019. Making Evaluation Work for the Achievement of SDG 4 Target 5: Equality and inclusion in Education. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370558>.

80. The internal mid-term review of the CRF recommended to continue to consolidate the revised CRF, but also to rationalize and simplify the use of data along the results chain and identify alternative methods to capture results.

### Internal reform

81. The **IRM**, a major internal reform, was adopted to support the operationalization of the strategic plan. A review of the IRM is beyond the scope of the MTR, which instead makes use of the findings from the audit of the four IRM country pilots.<sup>53</sup>
82. The new financial framework has improved country budget transparency. The “line of sight” approach is a cornerstone in the commitment to transparency. It aims at directly linking resources to results. Putting in place a resources to results plan remains a top priority for WFP and is a core deliverable with a deadline of 2021.
83. However, senior WFP managers said that the IRM transition was a major challenge. Insufficient time to test and validate new systems and tools resulted in burdening the country offices.
84. Following the approval of their CSPs, most country offices undertook organizational alignment exercises to ensure their **human resources**, skills and competencies matched the requirements of their strategies.
85. WFP’s workforce increased by 17 percent between 2017 and 2019. The ratio field to headquarters has remained largely unchanged, and much progress has been made since 2018 to achieving national employee gender targets, particularly following strong encouragement and follow up from the Executive Director. However, the recruitment of female staff remains a major challenge for some country offices.
86. In 2018–2019, a **functional review** was carried out to clarify the roles of headquarters and regional bureaux considering that services should be provided at the point where they can be most effective and efficient. The roles of 15 functional areas across headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices were reviewed in order for WFP to best serve the interests of beneficiaries.
87. In 2019, a new **organizational structure** at headquarters was introduced by the Executive Director in response to a rapidly changing operational environment. Changes were designed to support a more complex operational environment requiring the integration of humanitarian and development approaches, and to effectively manage a 30 percent increase in the resource level.
88. The new organizational structure, which became operational in the second semester of 2019, is meant to strengthen accountability within and among departments in headquarters, ensure that resources are wisely spent, and enhance oversight, risk management, and internal controls.

### Cross-cutting issues

89. The 2017 and 2018 MOPAN reports note that WFP needs to implement its work on cross-cutting issues more systematically and that there is scope for improvement in the areas of protection, climate change and environmental sustainability.

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<sup>53</sup> Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia and the Sudan.

## **Humanitarian protection, accountability to affected populations and humanitarian principles**

90. In 2012 WFP was one of the first United Nations humanitarian entities to formalize its protection responsibilities by adopting an explicit policy.<sup>54</sup> An evaluation of the policy concluded that WFP provides assistance in a manner that respects the dignity of recipients. By taking into account gender, age, disability status and diversity, WFP programmes were well tailored to specific needs.
91. WFP is addressing disability inclusion in the revision of its Protection Policy as well as in a Disability Inclusion Road Map which seeks to respond to the Secretary-General's 2019 United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. Since 2019, WFP country offices are reporting on numbers of disabled persons among WFP beneficiaries, as part of WFP's commitment to render its programmes inclusive of persons with disabilities. However additional work is needed to adapt assistance to the needs of persons with disabilities.
92. The revision of the Protection Policy explicitly links humanitarian protection to accountability to affected populations while upholding the humanitarian principles in complex contexts.
93. WFP has committed to provide accurate, timely and accessible information to affected people about its assistance; to provide means to voice complaints and give feedback on areas relevant to operations in a safe and dignified manner; to seek their views and invite regular feedback.
94. Investments in digital tools have been made to enhance communication with and accountability to affected populations. A complaints and feedback mechanism allows affected communities to access information on humanitarian assistance and to provide feedback on the assistance received. However, results from the evaluations of large-scale emergencies show room for improvement. In these contexts, even when assistance is provided in accordance with international humanitarian principles, the massive scale of the response may hamper WFP's ability to fully deliver on all aspects of beneficiary protection and accountability.
95. WFP's statement on humanitarian principles and access is consistent with WFP policies on gender and humanitarian protection. However, WFP is operating in increasingly complex contexts. Its staff face a growing number of operational, security and safety challenges. In some contexts, these factors may challenge WFP's ability to ensure full neutrality and operational independence in all localities given the trade-offs and operational difficulties.
96. As the level of understanding of the humanitarian principles varies greatly across the organization, learning material on new realities, e.g. negotiation with non-state armed actors, has been made available to support WFP staff to better understand the trade-offs when operationalizing the humanitarian principles in different contexts.

## **Gender**

97. A key priority of the 2030 Agenda is to support efforts to address gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). The strategic plan makes direct reference to WFP's integration of GEWE into all its work.
98. According to the evaluation of the WFP Gender Policy (2015–2020) its design has been appropriately informed and aligned with WFP's mandate, the 2030 Agenda and the

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<sup>54</sup> "WFP Humanitarian Protection Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2012/5-B/Rev.1).

United Nations reform. GEWE continues to be a priority for WFP's leadership. WFP's Gender Action Plan provides a robust framework for gender mainstreaming, but better integration of GEWE into programming should continue along with collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN-Women on reproductive health and gender-based violence.

99. In countries implementing L3 emergency responses, gender issues showed mixed results. For example, the Nigeria CSP made significant investments in gender and human resources, but to be effective greater ownership and integration across activities are required. Insufficient human and financial resources and limited management attention prevented the Syrian Arab Republic country office from adequately operationalizing the gender policy and its action plan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, WFP has been struggling with gender parity. However, innovative resilience activities jointly implemented with FAO in the country's stable regions include strong women's empowerment elements.

### Partnerships

100. WFP's commitment to partnerships and its central role in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is clearly articulated in the strategic plan.
101. Evaluations of the first generation CSPs noted that the CSP approach offered opportunities to develop extensive and diverse relationships with United Nations agencies, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government counterparts and stimulated partnerships with the private sector. The recently approved private-sector partnerships and fundraising strategy (2020–2025)<sup>55</sup> aims to transform how WFP works with businesses and other actors – particularly at the local level – to save and change more lives.
102. Since the approval of the Nutrition Policy<sup>56</sup> in 2017, WFP has fostered global operational collaboration with governments, United Nations agencies and other partners to achieve greater nutrition impact. An internal audit of WFP's nutrition activities<sup>57</sup> noted that these partnerships are essential in the current funding environment to achieve collective nutrition goals. WFP's long-standing collaboration with key partners such as UNICEF, the organization's role in multisectoral, multi-stakeholder fora and networks, e.g. the Committee on World Food Security and the Scaling Up Nutrition business network, are critical to building evidence in operational research.
103. WFP partners with more than 1,000 NGOs and civil society organizations, the majority of which are community based. However, the predominantly contractual relationship between WFP and its partners was identified as a limitation for synergies. Annual partnership consultations have become more strategic. During the 2019 annual partnership consultation, leaders of NGOs and WFP discussed pressing global challenges and opportunities faced by the humanitarian and development community.
104. The MTR held discussions with cooperating partners to gather their views on actions where complementary strengths could be leveraged to change people's lives. Most partners mentioned inclusive programme design, resources predictability and multi-pronged approaches to bridging humanitarian and development interventions.

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<sup>55</sup>WFP/EB.2/2019/4-A/Rev.1.

<sup>56</sup> WFP/EB.1/2017/4-C.

<sup>57</sup> Office of the Inspector General Internal Audit Report AR/20/08 February 2020.

## Environmental sustainability

105. WFP's 2017 Environmental Policy,<sup>58</sup> complemented by WFP's Climate Change Policy,<sup>59</sup> commits WFP to minimizing negative impact. WFP has been reducing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles and from buildings through energy and fuel efficiency measures. WFP has emerged as a leader in United Nations system-wide action to systematically manage environmental impacts.
106. WFP is implementing an environmental management system based on ISO 14001 in five countries. Processes are in place to screen projects for environmental and social sustainability in more than 20 countries. Since June 2018, a WFP energy efficiency programme has supported 47 projects in 20 countries, with an estimated annual cost saving of over USD 700,000 and reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of more than 2,000 tons through the use of solar power systems and energy-efficient lighting.

## Consolidated findings

**Finding 1. Given WFP's mandate and experience, the focus of its strategic plan on SDG 2 and SDG 17 is appropriate and aligned with the organization's expected role within the United Nations Development System (UNDS) and the lead humanitarian coordination body, Inter-Agency Standing Committee.**

107. The WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) was designed to provide WFP with a strategic direction that is fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The overarching vision of the 2030 Agenda is ambitious and transformative, requiring “a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development”.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, WFP's vision to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs is not limited to achieving “Zero Hunger” (SDG 2) but also includes “Partnerships to Achieve the 2030 Agenda” (SDG 17).
108. Given WFP's mandate, experience and expertise, the first goal of the strategic plan focuses on SDG 2 elements: a) ending hunger; b) improving nutrition; c) achieving food security.
109. Working in “partnership” and supporting partners is a core feature of WFP's work. As mentioned in the WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017) “No single organization can address today's complex food and nutrition security challenges. Partnership is more important than ever”. Furthermore, the comparative advantage of WFP in providing humanitarian services in the fields of logistics coordination and support, air services, emergency telecommunications and, together with FAO, food security cluster coordination is widely acknowledged.
110. Therefore, the second goal of WFP's Strategic Plan appropriately prioritizes and actively pursues contributing to the achievement of SDG 17.

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<sup>58</sup> “Environmental Policy” (WFP/EB.1/2017/4-B/Rev.1\*).

<sup>59</sup> “Climate Change Policy” (WFP/EB.1/2017/4-A/Rev.1\*).

<sup>60</sup> Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>.

**Finding 2. The respective role and value added of strategic objectives versus strategic results is not well understood by managers and staff. WFP strategic results lack quantification.**

111. The strategic plan includes five strategic objectives and eight strategic results. The MTR understands that the strategic objectives were introduced to provide continuity with the conceptual approach of past strategic plans, while the strategic results aim to ensure alignment with relevant targets of SDG 2 and SDG 17.
112. The MTR found that WFP staff's awareness and understanding of the difference between strategic objectives and strategic results is poor<sup>61</sup> and some country offices are confused when selecting strategic objectives and strategic results. Typical areas of uncertainty include choosing between SO 1 (End hunger by protecting access to food) and SO 3 (Achieve food security) as well as between SR 3 (Smallholders have improved food security and nutrition through improved productivity and incomes) and SR 4 (Food systems are sustainable).<sup>62</sup>
113. Furthermore, a challenge arises concerning the measurement of WFP strategic results. While the related SDG targets for 2030 are clearly spelled out, the results to be achieved by the end of the five-year strategic plan are not quantified. Therefore, it is difficult to establish whether WFP's work is "on track".

**Finding 3. The concept of focus areas introduces additional fragmentation that complicates the articulation of strategic and holistic outcomes.**

114. The country level articulation of the WFP Strategic Plan are CSPs that distinguish three focus areas: crises response, resilience and root causes. The MTR understands that these categories were introduced in order to align with pre-existing governance and approval authorities.
115. These distinctions hamper programming across the humanitarian–development nexus as, in many cases, the underlying causes of food insecurity and vulnerability of a specific population require multiple activities that fall into different focus areas. In such cases the intervention to the targeted population cannot be expressed as one strategic and holistic outcome and instead separate outcomes need to be created for each focus area.

**Finding 4. The CRF would benefit from greater simplicity and clarity. Although progress has been made in reporting WFP's performance by strategic results, further work is needed to facilitate WFP's commitment to report on "resources to results".**

116. A level below the strategic outcomes are activities and outputs. Outputs relate to what WFP does and who benefits. They are the direct result of WFP's activities and contribute to outcomes. The CRF offers a list of standardized strategic outcome (19), output (14) and activity (13) categories in order to facilitate monitoring, reporting and performance management.
117. Internal lessons learned on the results chain<sup>63</sup> found that WFP country offices rarely or not at all make use of some of these categories. Furthermore, the selection of categories by country offices can be arbitrary because guidance on when it is appropriate to use the different types of activity categories lack definition and guidance.

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<sup>61</sup> Source: RMPP, Annual Performance Report 2018 Lessons learned, internal document, June 2019.

<sup>62</sup> In 2019, three years into the strategic plan, several country offices had to undergo budget revisions in order to move activities to the correct strategic objectives and strategic results.

<sup>63</sup> RMP, November 2019.

118. In 2019 WFP introduced SDG-related indicators in the revised CRF. These indicators are designed to measure WFP's contribution to the SDG targets making a step towards quantifying the strategic results.

**Finding 5. The design of a significant number of the first-generation country strategic plans has been influenced by donor funding preferences and mechanisms. In some instances, this has limited the design of country strategies that could better contribute to national hunger reduction priorities and the achievement of SDG goals. There is a need for a mindset shift, within WFP and among its donors, to promote and invest in strategic partnerships and long-range results, alongside emergency action.**

119. WFP's internal review of the first-generation CSPs and interviews with WFP field and headquarters managers revealed that country offices are struggling to match the ambition of the strategic plan, which calls for transformational country strategies that support nations in their pathways to achieving zero hunger, with the messages and feedback they receive regarding donor funding interests. In addition, funding earmarking at activity or sub-activity level prevents country directors from reallocating resources in case of pipeline breaks or funding imbalances across activities and outcomes. Within the organization, there is limited technical capacity and "seed funding" to support programme innovations that aim to strengthen national systems or build strategic partnerships.
120. For WFP to successfully implement the approved CSPs and achieve the intended strategic outcomes and results, adequate resources, both financial and human, are required.
121. The MTR found that overall staff numbers seem to be adequate and that many country offices have already been realigning the staff profiles required for implementing the CSPs.
122. However, there is room for WFP, and its Member States, to further promote, incentivize and support programmatic innovations that build on WFP's enabling capabilities and leverage strategic partnerships to strengthen national systems and sustainable solutions.

**Finding 6. Challenges posed by global trends such as climate change, conflicts, displacement and migration require strengthening the coherence of interventions across the humanitarian, development, peace and stability arenas. WFP's country strategic plans offer the opportunity to design coherent, integrated, longer-term strategies that address the underlying causes of vulnerability and food insecurity. The capacity to respond to unexpected shocks must also remain a priority for WFP.**

123. The world is not on track to achieve the SDG targets by 2030. Climate change and extreme climate events, conflicts and displacement, migration and urbanization are just some of the major global trends impacting on the global agenda, and on SDG 2 in particular. Accelerating the implementation of the strategic plan in order to enhance WFP's contribution to the SDGs is crucial and would also enable the organization to play its part in the Secretary-General's Decade of Action. Leap-frogging strategies, innovation and a process of systematic transformation are essential. Strengthening the coherence of interventions across the humanitarian, development, peace and stability spaces is central to reducing people's vulnerabilities and needs.
124. Considering the challenges posed by these global trends, WFP and other United Nations organizations are asked to enhance their programmatic efforts, systematically integrate their humanitarian, resilience and development programming, and thus provide lasting, rather than short-term, solutions.

125. The achievement of SDG targets will also require strong capacity to respond to unexpected shocks such as the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. The capacity to address pandemic outbreaks through effective socioeconomic responses and the provision of global logistics and supply services must remain a core competency of WFP.

**Finding 7. WFP's second strategic goal (partnership) offers a conducive environment to develop strategic and operational partnerships with a wide range of players including the private and finance sectors. WFP's guidelines have traditionally focused on transactional partnerships. Enhanced operational guidance on programmatic partnerships should help to unleash WFP's potential.**

126. By selecting SDG 17 as its second strategic goal, WFP highlights the critical role of partnerships in achieving the country strategic outcomes and contributing to the 2030 Agenda. WFP Strategic Goal 2 has allowed the organization to profile its important work on common services and platforms. The mid-term review identified several promising examples of strategic partnership, confirming that WFP has much to offer. However, WFP's body of work under Strategic Goal 2 still falls short of what it could be.
127. In a context where needs outstrip resources, complementarity and partnerships with a select set of organizations, including the RBAs, but also UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, the World Bank, and NGOs, are vital. Partnerships become the precondition for WFP to fully play a critical role in ending hunger. Enhanced operational guidance can help to unleash WFP's potential.

**Finding 8. The United Nations reform offers the opportunity to further enhance WFP's contribution to the 2030 Agenda.**

128. On 1 January 2019, the United Nations system began the implementation of the United Nations reform. A set of systemic changes were introduced to reposition the UNDS to better deliver on the 2030 Agenda. According to the United Nations Secretary-General the reform aims at making the United Nations less bureaucratic, more transparent and accountable, more decentralized and effective.
129. WFP is in the process of adjusting the analysis, design, implementation and monitoring of its operations in order to contribute more effectively to collective outcomes as envisaged by the UNSDCF's. The second-generation CSPs provide an opportunity for WFP to operationalize these adjustments, starting with those that will be submitted for approval during 2020.
130. Although it is too early to conclude how WFP's contribution to the 2030 Agenda could best benefit from the United Nations reform, areas that merit particular attention include the opportunity to forge strategic partnerships across the humanitarian–development nexus, better SDG financing, enhanced private sector engagement and improved country-level coordination and accountability.

**Finding 9. While it is too early for final conclusions about the effectiveness of WFP's internal reforms and culture change process, it appears that their rationale is sound and in line with WFP's commitments towards operational effectiveness, donor accountability and a respectful workplace culture.**

131. Global trends, including growing hunger, make WFP's role more important than ever and the further increase in size and complexity of WFP operations required new measures to ensure that Member State and leadership expectations continue to be met. A revision of WFP's organizational structure at headquarters, introduced in June 2019, as well as a

functional review resulted in revised terms of reference for headquarters and regional bureaux, all with the aim to better support operations in the field and to strengthen oversight over WFP's resources. Also, the majority of country offices have undertaken organizational alignment exercises to ensure their human resources, skills and competencies match the requirements of their country strategic plans.

132. A central feature of these internal reforms must include the promotion of a culture of change and the creation of a work environment that prevents and swiftly addresses all forms of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination.

**Finding 10. WFP's commitment to cross-cutting concerns such as adherence to humanitarian principles, environmental sustainability, gender equality, disability inclusion, beneficiary protection and accountability to affected populations remains strong and guidelines are continuously updated. However, increasingly complex operational contexts can make the adherence to cross-cutting principles challenging.**

133. WFP is operating in increasingly complex contexts. Humanitarian crises affect a growing number of people for prolonged periods. Several conflict situations are compounded with climate shocks, displacement and migration. In these contexts, WFP staff find it increasingly difficult to deliver assistance and cross-cutting considerations, such as promoting gender equality, adhering to humanitarian principles, disability inclusion, environmental protection and accountability to beneficiaries, become increasingly challenging.
134. Efforts to integrate cross-cutting concerns are largely on track, with policies and guidance continuously updated, although the MTR found that their full understanding and implementation is still uneven across WFP operations. Financing to support implementation of cross-cutting issues related to protection and humanitarian principles have largely been funded by interested donors through extra-budgetary resources; these should now be mainstreamed as core programme areas. Also, a special effort is currently under way concerning disability inclusion, with the development of the Disability Inclusion Road Map. Guidance as well as budget allocations will be needed to ensure that WFP's assistance is adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities.

## Recommendations

135. The strategic plan's focus on SDG 2 and SDG 17 is relevant and in line with WFP's mandate, expertise and comparative advantage. This focus should remain and, with adequate guidance and support, is well compatible with maximizing the contributions of WFP's work to other SDGs. WFP should ensure that all policies on cross-cutting issues are fully reflected in the formulation of the new strategic plan and that adherence to these principles even in complex operational contexts can be more systematically pursued. WFP's role in preparedness and response to key global challenges such as pandemic outbreaks should be explicitly articulated in the new strategic plan. (Findings 1 and 10)
136. WFP's new strategic plan should begin January 2022, in alignment with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Partnership and a coordinated approach, led by empowered Resident Coordinators, are at the heart of the United Nations Reform and the Decade of Action. Increased coordinated action is also dictated by the complexity of global trends, e.g. climate change, conflicts, migration, pandemic outbreaks, etc. The difficulties posed by COVID-19 are a striking example of how global challenges can only be overcome through coordinated efforts among governments, development and humanitarian partners. More than ever, WFP should pro-actively develop coalitions of strategic partners as currently under way for WFP school-based programmes, where school health and nutrition results

are drawn from comprehensive analyses carried out in collaboration with key partners. (Findings 6, 7, 8)

137. WFP should revisit and revise its strategic results, explicitly aligning them with the duration of the strategic plan. They should be quantified, costed and clearly articulate WFP's value proposition. Since strategic results can best be achieved through partnerships and complementary interventions, result targets should include WFP's direct and indirect contributions. For the next strategic plan, WFP may want to revisit the concept of Focus Areas (perhaps using a simpler categorization of its work into crisis and non-crisis areas). Already now, WFP should reformulate its programmatic offer based on the learning from the first years of the CSPs. All this should facilitate the aggregation of country-level results and the ongoing "Resources to Results" effort. Further, the use of "corporate result pathways" or "theories of change", underpinning each strategic result, would help WFP and the Executive Board in decision making, evaluation and performance management. (Findings 2, 3, 4, 7)
138. WFP, and its Member States, should encourage and incentivize country strategies that respond to national needs and priorities and promote lasting solutions, while responding to humanitarian needs. This includes further guiding and supporting country office efforts to strengthen local capacities, for instance by transferring know-how to national entities, building resilience and fostering self-reliance. It also includes supporting country offices in testing and funding promising solutions, including identifying and securing the investment needed to roll out and scale up successful pilots and initiatives. WFP's internal reforms at headquarters and regional bureaux level aim to strengthen support for strategies and operations in the field. At the country level, WFP should continue to pursue organizational alignment exercises to ensure international and national human resources, skills and competencies match the requirements of national hunger reduction priorities and WFP's strategic direction. While WFP CSPs offer a conducive environment to articulate country strategies that are transformative, integrating humanitarian, resilience and development interventions, these can only be fully operationalized with adequate technical and financial support. (Findings 5 and 9)
139. While this report was prepared to guide the formulation of the next strategic plan, some of its findings and recommendations warrant action during the remaining period of the current Strategic Plan. This includes strengthening funding and implementation of cross-cutting issues, exploring strategic partnerships, further learning from the revised CRF and testing ways of incentivizing more transformative country strategies as we move into the second-generation CSPs.

## **Annex I: Partnership on real-time hunger data**

1. In late 2018, WFP and the Alibaba Group forged a strategic partnership on the use of innovative technology to contribute to sustainable development and achieving zero hunger. Since 2019, WFP has been working with Alibaba Cloud to develop a new global hunger monitoring system that predicts the status of hunger in near real-time across countries and continents.
2. Alibaba Cloud, a global industry leader in cloud computing and data analytics, provides technical knowledge and expertise in artificial intelligence, data management and technology infrastructure. WFP contributes over 50 years of specialized knowledge on food security and nutrition analyses.
3. The result of the collaboration is an interactive map called *HungerMapLIVE*, which provides key metrics based on publicly available food security data from different sources including WFP. Machine learning models are used to predict food security in areas with limited information. Data are displayed on an interactive and user-friendly map. The map has become WFP's new global hunger monitoring system, supporting informed and timely humanitarian decision making, thus improving the use of humanitarian resources.

## **Annex II: EMPACT: Working with the private sector to find solutions**

**EMPACT** is a WFP initiative that helps youth from the refugees and host communities to build a brighter future.

**Problem:** Most refugees around the world are hosted by developing countries that are grappling with their own socioeconomic challenges and struggling with youth employment. In this environment, refugees have low chances to become self-reliant.

**Options:** Technology is changing the future of work. People with digital skills have better chances to take advantage of remote digital work opportunities. Around the globe, there is a growing demand for lower-skilled, labour intensive digital services. Online micro jobs can present new livelihood opportunities.

**Solution:** Through tailored vocational training programmes EMPACT provides young refugees and members of the host community with the necessary digital skills. Participants will learn everything from navigating the Web and annotating images, to dedicated training on major commercial software and applications. Through its partnership with leading tech firms, EMPACT facilitates the identification of online work opportunities for the trainees.

**Results:** Since 2016, EMPACT has trained close to 7,000 students, most of them female, in Lebanon, Iraq and Kenya. A significant number of students have subsequently generated an income through online work. It is estimated that 33,000 lives have improved as a result of this initiative.

**Scale-up:** WFP is proactively broadening the network of private sector companies to expand online work opportunities beyond the initial three pilot countries. Together with UNHCR, WFP is also advocating for the refugees' right to work, access to financial services and online payments. The goal is to reach 20,000 youth by the end of 2020 and 100,000 over the next five years.

### **Annex III: Partnership for human capital development**

1. The development of children's human capital is one of the most effective investment and productive use of resources countries can make. The Human Capital Index ranks Africa as achieving just 40 percent of its potential. GDP in Africa could be 2.5 times higher if the benchmarks for health and education were achieved.
2. WFP's school feeding strategy for 2020–2030 is founded on a partnership approach to building human capital.
3. In January 2020, at the World Economic Forum, the Executive Directors of WFP and UNICEF launched a partnership aimed at ensuring that 35 million children in 30 of the poorest countries receive a health and nutrition package through schools.
4. WFP is also reviewing its partnerships with other agencies including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, FAO, the Global Partnership for Education, the World Bank and Education Cannot Wait in order to broaden the expertise and inputs for the multi-partnership approach to deliver results by 2030.

## **Annex IV: The Farm to Market Alliance: a partnership to enhance food systems**

1. The Farm to Market Alliance (FTMA) is a public-private sector consortium of six agribusinesses and agri-focused organizations, including WFP, that came together to make markets work better for smallholder farmers. FTMA helps farmers receive relevant information, investment and support for activities from crop planting to selling the harvest. The members of the alliance contribute industry experience and knowledge that combine to offer a package of solutions to the farmers.
2. In the 2018/2019 agricultural season, FTMA successfully engaged with almost 90,000 farmers in Kenya, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. It developed a network of farmer service centres that serve as one-stop shops through which farmers can interact with service providers.
3. Since 2015, FTMA has catalysed over USD 30 million in smallholder crop sales to commercial buyers. These transactions involved over 65 local private-sector players and represented a major increase in sales by smallholders in formal commercial markets.

## **Annex V: Integrated approaches**

### **Scaling-up resilience in the Sahel**

1. Since September 2018, WFP and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) have been working with 71 partners to scale up resilience<sup>1</sup> in the G5 Sahel countries.<sup>2</sup> The project, which reached close to 1 million people, offers an integrated package of interventions including rehabilitation of degraded land, creation of water management infrastructure, nutrition sensitive agriculture, school feeding as well as skills and knowledge transfer.
2. At the end of the project's first year, significant improvements were already achieved in terms of access and utilization of food, dietary diversity especially among children under two.
3. Harmonized complementary actions among partners, government technical services and good coordination mechanisms between governments and partners proved to be the critical success elements.

### **Supporting refugee self-reliance in Kenya**

4. Since 2016, WFP, UNICEF and FAO have been partnering with UNHCR to create opportunities for the self-reliance of refugees and host communities in north-west Kenya.
5. Leveraging on resources drawn from both humanitarian and development funding streams, and the integrated work of the four agencies, the traditional refugees' assistance model was transformed into opportunities for self-reliance. This included introducing innovative aid delivery,<sup>3</sup> increasing beneficiaries' financial inclusion, developing structured local retail markets, strengthening the capacity of market operators and most importantly working in close collaboration with the local government.
6. The role of donors was equally critical. The European Union Trust Fund (EUTF) provided multi-year funding in order to enable longer-term investments in the self-reliance of refugees and host populations. Other donors that were engaged in the humanitarian assistance for refugees joined this initiative by tapping into development budget lines. This allowed FAO and WFP to create infrastructures for both livestock and crop production, facilitating access to climate-smart agricultural technologies, reducing competition for scarce resources and creating opportunities for income generation.

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<sup>1</sup> Scaling-up Resilience in the G5 Sahel Countries: A WFP-BMZ Partnership, First annual report (September 2018 to August 2019), November 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR cash for permanent houses.

## Acronyms

CRF	corporate results framework
CSP	country strategic plan
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FTMA	Farm to Market Alliance
GDP	gross domestic product
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
IRM	Integrated Road Map
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MTR	mid-term review
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBA	Rome-based agency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework