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Update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response

Executive summary

This paper provides an update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response, focusing on developments in 2019. The scale, complexity and protracted nature of humanitarian crises around the world in 2019 continued to undermine progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 on zero hunger. By supporting government efforts to achieve food security for all, WFP contributed to multisectoral responses to these crises and worked with its partners to provide food and other life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people affected by conflict, drought, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, crop failures and epidemics.

Humanitarian funding requirements and the number of appeals continue to rise steadily. In 2019 United Nations-coordinated appeals required nearly USD 30 billion to assist 117.5 million people. WFP received the largest proportion of this funding, 35 percent of the amount raised through global appeals. Funding raised against the Global Humanitarian Overview amounted to USD 18 billion, or 61 percent of the required resources.

Several global initiatives began to take shape in 2019, including global compacts on migration and refugees and inter-agency forums created to take action on the compact commitments. WFP joined the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All and became a co-lead for the workstream on innovative programming in fragile states and for outbreak responses, together with the World Health Organization Health Emergencies Programme. WFP also supported health emergency responses to the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the cholera outbreak in Yemen.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee continued to be a major forum for advocacy and the coordination of urgent humanitarian response. WFP and its partners sought to improve the coordination of cash programming in line with the May 2018 statement on cash assistance by the principals of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and WFP. In May 2019, the principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed the revised

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Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activation Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events in response to heightened concern over the Ebola outbreak. Improving measures related to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of aid workers remained a high priority for the standing committee and WFP throughout the year.

Through its knowledge partnership with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, WFP continued to assess its contribution to improving the prospects for peace. Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other stakeholders, WFP sought to ensure the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2417 (2018), which condemns the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

WFP strengthened its partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees by establishing the first joint virtual programme of excellence and targeting hub and worked with the World Health Organization on a cross-cutting global memorandum of understanding, which was signed in early 2020.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response (WFP/EB.A/2020/5-B).

* 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.

I. Global context

1. By the end of 2019, 166.5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance,¹ compared with 133 million in 2018.² Conflict and instability, combined with mass displacement, climate shocks and disregard for international humanitarian law, kept humanitarian needs high and undermined food security and nutrition in many parts of the world.
2. WFP provided food assistance to 97 million people in 2019, leveraging its broad experience in humanitarian, resilience and development programming. The organization managed an unprecedented number of Level 2 and 3 emergencies, ranging from long-standing operations in conflict-affected South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen to emergency response in Mozambique, where it provided life-saving assistance to populations affected by Cyclone Idai, one of the worst storms ever to hit southern Africa. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, WFP's work helped to avert what could have been a greater Ebola crisis, and humanitarian–development–peace initiatives were implemented in Nigeria and the central Sahel. Negotiations were undertaken to establish a presence in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and assistance was scaled up in neighbouring countries.

II. Global processes

3. At the beginning of 2019, around 71 million people had been uprooted from their homes, including over 41 million internally displaced persons, the highest number on record.³ Amid these unprecedented levels of displacement, the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018 provided a framework for action to address displacement and uphold the rights of refugees and migrants.

Global Compact on Refugees

4. In December 2019 WFP participated in the first ever global refugee forum, which served as a platform for announcing concrete measures aimed at achieving the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees and for considering new challenges and opportunities to enhance the distribution of burdens and responsibilities. WFP pledged its support through three commitments, which it will aim to meet by leveraging its unique expertise in vulnerability assessment, targeting, mapping and communication with affected populations and through joint fundraising efforts with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). WFP also made a joint commitment with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to integrate refugee data into the *Global Report on Food Crises* from 2020 onwards. WFP joined The Global Energy Challenge, which aims to give all refugee settlements and nearby host communities access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy by 2030. A side event on sustainable energy for food security and nutrition in refugee and host community settings was co-organized with FAO, the Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement Coordination Unit and Norway; the session underscored why access to energy at every stage of the food chain is key to food security and nutrition.

¹ Global Humanitarian Overview 2020. https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO-2020_v9.1.pdf.

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-funding-update-december-2018-united-nations-coordinated-appeals-enarfr>.

³ Global Humanitarian Overview 2020. https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO-2020_v9.1.pdf.

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

5. WFP continued to support the United Nations Network on Migration set up by the Secretary-General to assist national governments in the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The network facilitated the establishment of several national and regional networks. In May 2019, the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund was created to support national migration priorities, ensure better protection of migrants, foster cooperation and promote migration governance that benefits all.

Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives for All

6. WFP became a signatory agency of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (GAP), launched at the 74th United Nations General Assembly. The GAP is a commitment by 12 multilateral health, development and humanitarian organizations to strengthen joint action to help countries accelerate progress towards the health-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Working with FAO, WFP provided critical inputs on food security and nutrition for the plan.
7. With the World Health Organization (WHO) Health Emergencies Programme, WFP co-led the GAP's Accelerator 7 workstream on innovative programming in fragile and vulnerable states and for disease outbreak response. Through collaboration in Yemen, partners identified innovative and operational best practices that could be scaled up through the GAP and the Deliver Accelerated Results Effectively and Sustainably initiative. WFP country offices sought to engage more closely with health and GAP partners, for example in Mali, where WFP supported the national action plan underpinned by the GAP.

33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

8. The 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) met in December 2019 with the core objective of improving the lives of people affected by armed conflict, disasters and other emergencies. It adopted eight resolutions aimed at creating an inclusive humanitarian environment. Resolution 7 calls for strengthened disaster preparedness laws and policies to address climate change and leave no one behind. Progress was also achieved on data protection, with members agreeing not to request or use personal data collected by the RCRC movement for purposes incompatible with their humanitarian work. For the first time, discussions covered the importance of humanitarian work in urban areas, referring to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies urban community resilience tool box, which helps urban communities identify both risks they face and their resilience priorities and to design sustainable and scalable solutions together with a diverse set of partners.

ECOSOC humanitarian affairs segment

9. The theme of the 2019 humanitarian affairs segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was "promoting action to save lives, reach those in need and reduce humanitarian risk, vulnerability and need: looking towards the seventieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the climate summit called for by the Secretary-General". Discussions centred on climate change, localization, respect for international humanitarian law, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, internal displacement, counter-terrorism measures, persons with disabilities and humanitarian financing, with a focus on the need for increased donor investment in preparedness and early warning. WFP's Information Technology Division presented the first augmented reality experience produced by the United Nations ("Disrupting Hunger? How We ARE!"), showcasing how data, innovation and technology are being streamlined to enhance WFP operations. WFP also co-sponsored a side event on conflict and hunger and participated in a panel discussion on anticipatory financing.

III. Collective response

Inter-Agency Standing Committee

10. In January 2019 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) principals endorsed a new IASC structure and working methods that support the IASC Strategic Priorities (2019–2020), focusing on operational response, accountability and inclusion, collective advocacy, humanitarian–development collaboration and humanitarian financing. The principals met in person in May and December to address issues of system-wide importance for humanitarian action and undertake a “horizon scanning” exercise for several critical humanitarian crises.
11. The principals agreed to continue to improve the coordination of cash programming in line with a joint commitment made by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNHCR, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and WFP. In April, the principals endorsed the revised Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activation Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events, which was subsequently activated in May in response to heightened concern over the Ebola outbreak. The committee also endorsed IASC guidelines on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action and decided to include that issue in future meetings. The principals discussed also United Nations development system reform, highlighting the need for joined up approaches to safeguard principled humanitarian action. In their meeting with the Good Humanitarian Donorship Group in December, they sought to develop a shared understanding of the challenges facing the system.
12. PSEA and the prevention of sexual harassment remained a priority for the principals. In 2019, the High Commissioner for Refugees assumed the role of the IASC champion for this issue, identifying three priorities for his tenure: bolstering prevention, expanding safe spaces and promoting a respectful use of authority. The IASC recognized the importance of demonstrating cultural change and addressing power dynamics and expressed its continued commitment to advocacy, dedicated resources and the promotion of the six IASC core principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse, especially in high-risk humanitarian situations. The IASC further committed to promoting an inter-agency misconduct disclosure scheme to prevent perpetrators from moving from one agency to another and endorsed the inter-agency training course “Saying no to Misconduct”. Several members promised contributions to a community outreach and communication fund designed to provide grants to field-level partners. The principals called for greater advocacy on mental health and psychosocial support and endorsed a minimum support package. WFP committed to designating inter-agency PSEA coordinators in Afghanistan, Colombia, Mozambique, Nigeria and the Sudan, a process that will continue throughout 2020.
13. Through the IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG), WFP advocated a more effective and field-focused integration of early warning – risk and preparedness analysis – with early action. The IASC Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness Group, in collaboration with field offices, started recommending high-level action in their reports to the EDG to ensure that early warning leads to early action.
14. WFP participated in EDG field missions to Burkina Faso and Nigeria to assess challenges and highlight those requiring additional support from organizations and donors. WFP also provided support during health emergencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen, running supply chain and logistics services in collaboration with WHO.
15. Under the leadership of its co-chairs, WFP and the Norwegian Refugee Council, the IASC Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) met in April and November to set priorities for improving effectiveness in the field and examine progress made by the IASC results groups. To encourage more participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from

developing countries, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies was assigned two additional seats for national NGO representation in the OPAG and results groups.

16. The IASC results group on humanitarian–development collaboration released guidance on collective outcomes, developed in consultation with the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration, the United Nations Development Coordination Office, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The guidance was informed by a 2019 WFP internal paper examining collective outcomes. In November, OECD/DAC and INCAF hosted a meeting with the IASC results group on humanitarian–development collaboration to foster enhanced understanding of the humanitarian, development and peace nexus by OECD countries and organizations working in the field. WFP presented initial findings on its contribution to improving prospects for peace, stemming from collaboration with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
17. The structure of the IASC gender capacity (GenCap) initiative was revised in 2019, and a director-level advisory group was set up to replace the former steering committee. These changes reinforced synergies between GenCap and an IASC protection capacity initiative, although there is still a lack of experienced multilingual gender advisers available for deployment, particularly to the Middle East and West Africa.

Humanitarian programme cycle

18. WFP continued to engage in the humanitarian programme cycle steering group led by OCHA, which reviews the cycle and its processes, guidance and products in order to improve the quality of collective humanitarian responses. The group completed new templates and practical guidance on humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans. WFP promoted the use of the integrated food security phase classification (IPC) system in the calculation of the number of people in need for humanitarian needs overviews. Internal guidance for country offices on engaging in the humanitarian programme cycle was developed, and WFP worked with OCHA to expand the multi-partner review to United Nations agencies and NGOs. Launched in December 2019 in multiple locations, the 2020 Global Humanitarian Overview focuses on outputs and impact and compares the scope of response plans with global needs.

Global clusters and shared humanitarian services

19. The global logistics cluster supports logistics emergency response for humanitarian actors through coordination, information management and facilitation of access to common logistics services where local capacities are insufficient. In 2019 the cluster was active in nine countries and one region;⁴ it was activated in Malawi, Mozambique, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela⁵ and Zimbabwe and deactivated in Cameroon and Iraq. The cluster's core strength is partnership diversity: in 2019 it worked with 715 partners at the global, regional and national levels. The cluster has also increased efficiency by providing verified humanitarian logistics information. Over the year, 1,736 information updates were published on its website, receiving over half a million views.
20. The global food security cluster, co-led by FAO and WFP, was active in 33 countries, including two newly activated countries, Burkina Faso and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The food security component represented 27 percent, the largest share, of global humanitarian funding requirements (USD 8.2 billion out of a total USD 29.7 billion) and received

⁴ Global Logistics Cluster. 2020. *Global Logistics Cluster Annual Report 2019*. <https://logcluster.org/annualreport/2019/>.

⁵ With the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs acting as lead agency and support from the logistics cluster in WFP headquarters, as WFP did not have a presence in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2019.

USD 5.1 billion. Together with the Global Network Against Food Crises, the cluster identified a methodology for harmonizing humanitarian and development interventions related to food security; nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene; and health. The methodology was tested in Chad and will be applied in other countries.

21. The emergency telecommunications cluster was active in 21 countries, supporting preparedness activities in 12 Pacific island nations and responding to emergencies in nine countries.⁶ The provision of timely, predictable and effective information and communications technology services contributed to improved response and coordination among humanitarian organizations.
22. The deployment of drones in the aftermath of tropical cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique shortened the time needed to map the hardest-hit areas from one week to two or three days. This agile approach to data collection and damage assessment yields more accurate information and facilitates faster decision making. Local staff in nine high-risk countries were trained in drone use.
23. Through its network of six hubs, the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) sent emergency relief items and equipment to 84 countries in support of 42 partner organizations. The UNHRD field team was deployed to two sudden-onset emergencies in Mozambique, where it helped set up the logistics response to Cyclone Idai, and in the Bahamas, in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. UNHRD staff also travelled to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Panama, the Sudan and Uganda to support operations in those countries. Capacity building activities were organized in Brindisi and Kuala Lumpur. A newly launched partner portal improved the visibility of partners' stocks and operations, resulting in enhanced transparency and accountability. The UNHRD Lab provided tailored equipment for use in disease outbreak responses, such as new cold chain storage solutions for specialized food and medicine.
24. In 2019, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service completed 15 years of operations, providing air transport services for the entire humanitarian and development community. Its 17 active operations spanned 20 countries and connected more than 300 destinations. The service transported more than 400,000 passengers from more than 800 organizations, predominantly NGOs, United Nations agencies, donors and government entities. Over 1,400 people were evacuated or relocated for medical or security reasons. Major achievements of the year included scaled-up responses in the central Sahel and to the Ebola crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; deployment of aerial support to Mozambique in response to cyclones Idai and Kenneth; new operations in Haiti to ease access constraints caused by the evolving socio-political crisis there; and support during the flood emergency in central and eastern Africa.

Humanitarian-development-peace collaboration

25. WFP continued to work on humanitarian, development and peace collaboration principally through the country strategic plan process, complemented by its knowledge partnership with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The 2019 publication *The World Food Programme's Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace* set out the importance of targeting and prioritization, resilience-building activities and school feeding programmes as foundations for peace and development. WFP also developed a paper examining collective outcomes to serve as guidance for country offices.

⁶ The Bahamas, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Iraq, Libya, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

26. Following an invitation from OECD/DAC to adhere to its recommendation on the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, WFP met with INCAF and then undertook a comprehensive review of progress and gaps relating to the nexus to outline the way forward, including a stepped-up conflict-sensitive approach to integrated programme design that would reduce risks, vulnerabilities and need. This process is also supporting the development of an updated WFP strategy on the nexus.
27. In 2019, the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration focused on supporting progress at the country level and on a more robust integration of the peace component into humanitarian and development work. Its work in relation to seven countries⁷ identified several capacity gaps, including in data analysis, and the need for an innovative approach to financing.

Upholding international humanitarian law

28. Jointly with FAO, experts and United Nations Member States, WFP advocated the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2417, which condemns the use of starvation as a weapon of war. At the fortieth regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, WFP called for full implementation of the resolution and urged all parties to conflicts to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights laws. WFP also contributed to a report by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food presented to the General Assembly in October 2019. In the margins of the 2019 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, WFP and FAO organized a side event entitled “Conflict and Hunger: Implementing United Nations Security Council resolution 2417 for Humanitarian Impact,” which sought to engage Member States as champions, leveraging data to foster early action and prevention and upholding monitoring and compliance with international humanitarian law.

Humanitarian leadership

29. In 2019 WFP increased its presence in humanitarian leadership roles, with one staff member appointed as deputy special representative of the Secretary-General/resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator in the Central African Republic, one as humanitarian coordinator in Mozambique and two as resident coordinators in Liberia and the United Republic of Tanzania, in addition to the already appointed resident coordinator in Bhutan and resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator in Nigeria. Twelve WFP staff members qualified for the Humanitarian Coordinator Pool. The human resources and senior management team worked on strengthening internal career and selection processes for senior staff on track to qualify for resident coordinator positions, aiming to increase WFP’s humanitarian leadership through appointments to these positions. WFP also shared its views on the future of humanitarian leadership assessment and selection processes as part of broader efforts by OCHA and the United Nations Development Coordination Office to improve succession planning for resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator posts.

IV. Focus areas

Humanitarian funding

30. WFP continued to strengthen its evidence base to better understand the realities, barriers and opportunities involved in improving funding for the humanitarian system. A multi-year strategic planning framework was adopted in 2019 to facilitate multi-year contributions from donors and multi-year planning and high-quality partnerships with NGOs. Multi-year

⁷ Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, the Niger, Nigeria and Somalia.

income accounted for 17 percent of WFP's total 2019 funding, reaching USD 1.4 billion, an increase of USD 36 million compared with 2018.

31. WFP remained a top recipient of the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund funding allocations, receiving USD 148 million in 2019, compared with USD 139 million in 2018. WFP also received USD 159 million from other United Nations funds and agencies. Germany, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were the biggest contributors of unearmarked or loosely earmarked funding, which amounted to USD 269 million of the USD 8 billion received.

Preparedness, early warning and early action

32. WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response Package continues to be revised to increase country management accountability and context-specific risk analysis capacity and to align it with the revised Integrated Road Map and country strategic planning approach. Tools in the package are being further digitalized to augment essential preparedness for in-country risks and to support enhanced readiness when early warning suggests that those risks could lead to an imminent crisis. Ten preparedness training sessions and simulations were carried out in 2019 for country offices, national government organizations and inter-agency partners.
33. The corporate alert system (CAS) was enhanced to become the key platform for linking early warning and preparedness to early action and response, as well as the tool for prioritizing corporate resources for emergencies. Twenty-one allocations, totalling USD 6 million, were released from the Immediate Response Account for preparedness, with more than 85 percent of allocations being made to countries highlighted through the CAS. With more refined indicators and with risks and gaps linked to actions, the CAS was updated every two months and used to inform planning and prioritization of WFP's broader capacity, funding and resources.

Natural hazards, climate change and anticipatory financing

34. WFP was on the frontline in responding to increasingly frequent and intense disasters in 2019, which included cyclones Kenneth and Idai in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe; Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas; Typhoon Tisoy in the Philippines; and heavy monsoon floods in Bangladesh. Over 1.5 million people were covered by WFP insurance programmes; 11,000 received insurance payouts totalling USD 276,000. The African Risk Capacity Replica initiative provided a safety net for over 1 million people in Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania and Zimbabwe in the event of catastrophic drought. WFP's forecast-based anticipatory financing initiative was active in 2019, supporting governments and communities in taking preventive action to mitigate the impact of disasters during the critical window between the forecast and actual onset of extreme climate events; in Bangladesh, cash transfers of USD 53 were provided to 4,500 families (25,000 people) three days ahead of a flood, and in December in the Philippines 1,000 beneficiaries received cash transfers of USD 45 four days ahead of Typhoon Tisoy. Between 2018 and 2019, WFP mobilized over USD 43 million from multilateral and bilateral sources for insurance-related activities.

Joint needs assessments and innovative platforms

35. Through inter-agency collaboration in ten countries,⁸ WFP continued to implement its 2018 interim guidance on essential needs assessments, adopting a household and multisector approach and engaging in broader collaboration with partners, including the International Food Policy Research Institute, UNICEF, UNHCR and the World Bank Group. Fifty-one IPC

⁸ Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar), Cameroon, Lebanon, Madagascar, Myanmar, Senegal, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

food security exercises were conducted in 27 countries, with WFP contributing the most data.

36. In April, the Food Security Information Network released its annual multi-partner publication, the *Global Report on Food Crises*, bringing together over 400 stakeholders committed to tackling food crises and envisioning a road map for joint future action. The quality of the report continued to improve, benefitting from the wealth of knowledge provided by 16 partners, including UNHCR, which contributed to the first technical consultations in October.
37. The importance of consensus-based food security analysis for understanding food crises was underscored through the “Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations” update, jointly produced by FAO and WFP as requested by the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 2417.
38. Underscoring its commitment to joint assessment, WFP contributed to the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* report, produced with FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF and WHO.
39. WFP used technology, including web-based data collection and high-resolution satellite imagery, to increase the coverage, frequency and depth of information available for joint analysis. WFP launched the Hunger Map, a global hunger monitoring system that provides near-real-time information and estimates of the food security situation in over 90 countries. The data produced constitute a public good.

Cash coordination

40. In 2019, USD 2.1 billion in cash transfers benefited 28 million people in 64 countries, a 23 percent increase from the USD 1.7 billion transferred in 2018. Assistance through cash-based transfers (CBTs) and commodity vouchers continued to grow, representing 40 percent of WFP’s total assistance in 2019 compared with 35 percent in 2018.
41. Recognizing the opportunities created by increased CBT collaboration, the signatories of the United Nations joint statement on cash assistance⁹ made progress on several issues, including the development of guidelines on collaborative procurement for humanitarian cash transfers (released in 2020), increased technical interoperability between systems, and the preparation of a joint agreement on data sharing for all agencies based on the UNHCR/WFP agreement. Lessons learned were drawn from the seven focal countries¹⁰ and included the various collaboration opportunities that exist across programme cycles and the recognition that the processes called for in the joint statement take time.
42. WFP and UNHCR jointly implemented a project entitled Mitigating Risks of Abuse of Power in Cash Assistance, which focused on the risk of abuse by private sector service providers. WFP raised awareness of this issue, including with regard to the rights of cash recipients and actions that can be taken by national regulators and financial service providers to reduce risk. WFP also developed and disseminated a toolkit for all actors involved in cash assistance.

Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, and the sexual harassment and abuse of aid workers

43. WFP led the adaptation of an International Organization for Migration training session on PSEA for use as an inter-agency tool for building the capacity of cooperating partners, which will be launched in 2020. WFP also worked on integrating PSEA into various initiatives, such

⁹ The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and WFP.

¹⁰ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, the Niger and Yemen.

as a meeting of global Food Security Cluster partners and standard operating procedures for complaint and feedback mechanism operators.

44. The Ethics Office continued to support around 300 PSEA focal points globally and launched an online training course on PSEA for staff in country offices and regional bureaux focused on supporting PSEA focal points in their roles. WFP and UNHCR held a joint workshop for East and central Africa to strengthen the capacities of PSEA focal points and increase inter-agency coordination.
45. WFP conducted ClearCheck verifications systematically before confirming new appointments in 2019 and has been revising its hiring procedures. This process gave consistency to the ClearCheck database, developed in collaboration with UNICEF, aimed at ensuring that United Nations entities do not hire individuals who have sexually harassed or abused aid workers or who have engaged in sexual exploitation or abuse. WFP and UNICEF have been administering a system-wide questionnaire on improved reporting of sexual harassment in the United Nations system, the aim of which is to highlight differences in the reporting mechanisms for sexual harassment used by different United Nations entities and to explore potential improvements.

Accountability to affected populations

46. Following the 2018 pilot of a complaint and feedback mechanism standardization initiative, the project was rolled out to more than 30 country offices. Among them, those for Libya, Mozambique and the Syrian Arab Republic used the guidance and tools to build inter-agency complaint and feedback mechanisms to support their humanitarian country teams. In collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, WFP launched an inter-agency toolkit that will help partners to assess, set up and manage various channels for communicating with communities during humanitarian crises.
47. WFP worked with OCHA to refine the criteria for assessing collective accountability to affected populations (AAP) in humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans; recruit an AAP coordinator for the Afghanistan country office; design terms of reference for collective AAP roles for surge response (coordinators, information management officers); and support the Humanitarian Coordinator Peer-2-Peer Knowledge Sharing Workshop: Leadership and AAP.
48. WFP continued to support the IASC results group on accountability and inclusion, positioning itself to take a lead role in 2020. WFP brought together a core team comprising representatives of OCHA, UNICEF and UNHCR to oversee the delivery of the 2020 workplan; WFP was also part of a technical expert group that advised on the implementation of the workplan. WFP also assumed responsibility for establishing an AAP directory service to help humanitarian coordinators develop collective AAP responses tailored to the countries where they serve.

Protection and inclusion of persons with disability

49. Following a 2018 evaluation of WFP's humanitarian protection policy, WFP started to revise the policy, informed by wide-ranging consultations including with donors and United Nations partners at the global and field levels. A proposed outline was shared with the Executive Board in late 2019 for a second informal consultation.
50. As part of its increased engagement on protection, WFP became a member of the global Protection Cluster strategic advisory group. Two standby partners with expertise in disability inclusion were deployed throughout 2019 to support the Cox's Bazar response and conduct a survey on how WFP is including or could include disability in its programming.

Gender

51. Since 2018, WFP adapted the IASC Gender with Age Marker – a framework for increasing the gender and age responsiveness of programming applied by clusters in L2 and L3 emergencies – to all CSP documents at the design level and to CSP implementation, which is assessed every year. The marker measures the extent to which gender and age are integrated into WFP country strategic plans, helping to assess achievements and challenges in mainstreaming gender equality and informing the subsequent year’s planning. WFP continued to use the marker in 2019 for planning and monitoring purposes through the online platform, as well as through in-person and remote technical support for country offices.

Strengthening the capacity of national and local actors

52. Recognizing the link between country capacity and the achievement of national development targets and based on WFP’s “whole of society” approach to country capacity strengthening, the first phase of a capacity strengthening initiative with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was developed and implemented between 2017 and 2019. This initiative focuses on sustainable organizational development. WFP and the Federation sought to strengthen the capacities of selected national societies, enabling them to address the essential needs of local households and communities effectively and efficiently, particularly for the most vulnerable, and to lead national crisis responses. Between 2017 and 2019 the initiative was piloted in six countries where WFP had a long history of collaboration with national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies.¹¹

V. Partnerships in focus

53. High-level meetings between WFP and UNHCR took place in January and May with the aim of making the partnership between the two organizations more predictable through strengthened strategic planning and joint programming, with an emphasis on operationalizing global agreements between the two.
54. The joint WFP/UNHCR strategy “Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Refugee Situations” and the “Joint Principles for Targeting Assistance to Meet Food and other Basic Needs to Persons of Concern” remained central to the continued focus on reaching the most vulnerable. Complemented by the Addendum on Cash Assistance to Refugees, the United Nations joint statement on cash assistance and its addendum on data sharing, these documents constitute a comprehensive framework for a new way of working to ensure the effective use of limited resources.
55. In February, a WFP/UNHCR joint strategic mission was undertaken in Chad to address challenges and promote operational collaboration. Another meeting was held in September to move forward on the interoperability commitments under the common cash statement, in particular on common data standards, shared identification verification mechanisms across systems (including biometrics), transparent assistance tracking and the interoperability of systems with complaint and feedback mechanisms.
56. In the spirit of strengthened cooperation, 2019 saw the first global joint programme established between WFP and UNHCR – the virtual Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub. Through the hub, a group of 11 roving experts and shared country coordinators will help design and implement programmes that better reduce risks, vulnerabilities and needs, in line with the global effort to achieve an integrated humanitarian, development and peace response.

¹¹ Burundi, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Pakistan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

57. WFP and WHO worked on a cross-cutting global memorandum of understanding enhanced technical collaboration in areas such as food security and nutrition, supply chain and outbreak response, complementing technical arrangements already in place. The memorandum also aims to increase strategic partnership and collaboration to facilitate achievement of SDG targets related to health, emergency response, the humanitarian–development nexus and business operations.
58. WFP continued to provide life-saving supply chain, logistics, engineering, aviation and operational support to WHO in the effort to battle cholera in Yemen and break the transmission chain and contain the spread of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Support included the provision of fuel for clinics, logistics, planning, telecommunications and engineering services, including the construction of cholera treatment centres.
59. WFP increased its strategic country-specific work with the World Bank Group, founded on complementarity and common interests in fragility, human capital development and agriculture and food security. WFP partnered with the World Bank Group on the Famine Action Mechanism and helped develop country-level action plans for Afghanistan and Somalia. The organizations worked together in a number of countries on Fill the Nutrient Gap analyses, school feeding and health, as well as on food security and poverty analysis and monitoring.
60. A co-founder of the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation, WFP continued to support frontline negotiators in some of the most challenging humanitarian operations. More than 120 WFP staff underwent negotiation training in 2019. The centre published the second edition of the *Field Manual on Frontline Humanitarian Negotiation*, which promotes a methodical approach to humanitarian negotiations aimed at improving operational access. In November 2019, WFP senior leadership participated in a high-level panel and roundtable discussion in Berlin on sharing negotiation tools and capacity across agencies in view of growing interdependence related to securing safe and principled access.
61. WFP supported the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and nine of its implementing partners delivered life-saving health equipment to 2,081 delivery points in eight fragile and conflict-affected countries including Mali, the Syrian Arab Republic, Chad, the Central African Republic and Zimbabwe. Goods worth over USD 36 million were handled on behalf of the fund; 14 million mosquito nets were delivered and supply chain solutions were provided to ensure that items for treating HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis reached those in need. This partnership has been hailed as a prime example of the humanitarian–development nexus in action and demonstrates how inter-sectoral collaboration can save lives.

Acronyms

AAP	accountability to affected populations
CBTs	cash-based transfers
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EDG	IASC Emergency Directors Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAP	Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSEA	protection against sexual exploitation and abuse
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization