



23 July 2020

## Internal Audit of WFP Operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (AR/20/12)

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### Management Comments

WFP Management welcomes the observations made by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in its audit report AR/20/12 on WFP operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The audit focused on WFP operations in the country from 1 January to 31 December 2019.

During the audit period, WFP was responding to a Level Three emergency in North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Tanganyika and the Kasai provinces, activated in 2017, as a result of the Kasai crisis and the country's massive internal displacements. Concurrently, WFP was responding to the third Ebola crisis in two years. The Ebola crisis was the second deadliest virus disease outbreak in history, exacerbating an already challenging food security situation in the country. In 2019, DRC was the world's second-largest hunger crisis.

WFP DRC's Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) 2018–2020 focuses on responding to large-scale population displacements and shocks, while pursuing long-term recovery and resilience activities to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. Four budget revisions were approved in the period 2018-2020 to scale up WFP's response, initially to prevent acute malnutrition, and subsequently to respond to multiple needs against the various strategic outcomes. A new DRC Country Strategic Plan (CSP) is due to be presented for Executive Board approval in November 2020.

The context of WFP operations in the DRC is multi-faceted and complex. Political instability, ongoing conflicts, internal displacements, disease outbreaks, and natural disasters are the main triggers of food insecurity. Access restrictions, due to poor infrastructure and insecurity, are the main constraints to operations on the ground in such a vast country.

WFP Management appreciates OIG's acknowledgement of the DRC country office's awareness of the country's contextual challenges and its coordinated plans to address these challenges by implementing an extensive portfolio of activities that is able to respond



to the protracted Level Three emergency, as well as the Ebola outbreak. WFP Management also appreciates OIG's acknowledgement of positive practices and initiatives undertaken by WFP in the DRC country office, such as the FAO-WFP joint resilience project, which has been especially well-received by stakeholders; the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service which continues to enable rapid humanitarian intervention in such a vast region; and actions taken to mitigate the high risk of fraud inherent in such a large operation, including the strengthening partner selection and the segregation of programme targeting and implementation.

WFP Management acknowledges the report's overall conclusion of "*partially satisfactory/major improvement needed*" and agrees with the recommendations related to five high and five medium priority observations. WFP Management has already started implementing some critical agreed actions and is committed to meeting the agreed termination dates, with all actions to be completed by 31 May 2021.

The five high priority observations are in the areas of organizational structure and staffing; beneficiary targeting and prioritization; data reconciliation of assisted beneficiaries; programme monitoring and reporting; and beneficiary data management. In this regard, Management notes that the country office has started implementing the agreed actions and has already finalized the Monitoring and Evaluation minimum monitoring requirements; reviewed the list of country office roles in SCOPE and potential segregation of duties; and explored possibilities for the automated and secure exchange of payment instructions and financial service provider reports through or in interface with SCOPE between the country office and financial service providers. Actions taken on medium-priority agreed actions include preparation and testing of the Business Continuity Plan and the IT Disaster Recovery Plan; regular meetings of the Resource Management Committee; and finalization of the consolidated procurement plan for 2020.

WFP Management will undertake regular reviews of outstanding agreed actions and provide updates through WFP's internal tracking system. The country office will also seek the regular guidance and support of the Regional Bureau, including through periodic oversight missions.

WFP Management would like to thank OIG for its thorough analysis, receptive engagement, and collaborative support. WFP Management considers the observations and the agreed actions presented by the Audit AR/20/12 as a valuable instrument to improve its operational efficiency and effectiveness.