



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
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WFP Urban Strategy

Achieving zero hunger
in an urbanising world

April 2023



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Introduction

Why this strategy

The world is becoming increasingly urban with 4.5 billion people (55 percent) of the global population currently living in urban areas and **70 percent of all food produced globally** destined for consumption in urban locations. The burden of food insecurity and malnutrition is shifting from rural to urban areas, particularly in middle income and least developed countries where many urban residents struggle to meet the high cost of living or afford enough food to meet their minimum nutritional requirements. Many cities and urban populations are also particularly vulnerable to various forms of conflict, climate and economic shocks, while international and domestic fluctuations in the cost of food and fuel are leading to hyperinflation, increased poverty and more people lacking enough food. With this strategy, WFP recognises these trends and highlights the urban environment as a crucial operational context to achieve zero hunger for the large percentage of the population that now concentrates in cities.

The Urban Strategy aims to articulate WFP's intent and priorities in urban areas, and provide a framework and strategic direction for its activities meet urgent needs and to contribute systematically to achieving zero hunger in cities. Internally, it also aims to support regional bureaus and country offices in framing discussions, help articulate problem statements and identify context-specific solutions suited for urban environments, in line with WFP's strategic plan for 2022-25 and WFP's mandate and comparative advantage.

The strategy is divided into four sections. **Chapter I** sets the scene, frames the problem and explains why it is crucial to act now. **Chapter II** provides the strategic framework set out to achieve WFP's vision for urban areas, including its urban priorities, modes of support, and comprehensive areas of work in line with the five corporate result areas for 2022-25. **Chapter III** outlines the key shifts in programme policy needed to achieve the vision and other enabling factors, and **Chapter IV** summarises the means for implementation.

The urban strategy builds on the 2002 policy recommendations,¹ is informed by operational and analytical evidence and has been developed with expertise from global headquarters,² regional bureaus³ and country offices, as well as lessons learned from WFP operations in urban areas for the past twenty years.



¹ See Urban food insecurity: Strategies for WFP (WFP/EB.A/2002/5-B)

² The review process at Headquarters level was led by the members of the Strategy Outcome Group, and included contributions from teams across the following areas: Nutrition, Social Protection, Cash transfers (CBT), Research, Assessment and Monitoring (RAM), Supply chain, Programme Cycle Management (PRO-M), Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS), Asset Creation, Livelihoods and Resilience Unit (PROR-L), TEC Beneficiaries, Gender Office, Emergency Preparedness & Response (EME), Strategic Partnerships Division (STR), School-based programming, RAM/PRO-P Targeting initiative, Food systems, Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Unit (PRO-C), Nexus and conflict sensitivity team, Innovation Accelerator (INK) and the ETC, Logistics and Food Security Clusters.

³ The review process at the regional bureau level was led by the Senior Regional Programme Advisors as members of the Urban Steering Committee, and included contributions from regional teams and focal points across programmatic areas, and from selected Country Offices. Consultations on the 2nd draft were held with Regional and Country Directors.




1.


Setting the scene



1.1 Why urban areas matter to achieve zero hunger

 **The world is increasingly urban.** 4.5 billion people or 55 percent of the global population currently lives in urban areas. By 2050, this is estimated to grow by 2.3 billion, or roughly **215,000 people each day**. The majority of this growth will concentrate in middle and low-income countries, with 90 percent expected to take place in Asia and Africa.⁴

This urbanisation megatrend and several inter-related factors (Fig. 1.1) are driving up the number of people facing food insecurity and malnutrition in urban settings. These factors include a **rise in urban poverty**, the prevalence of **urban inequality**, the concentration of **risks and compounded vulnerabilities** in dense cities, and the **land and nutrition transitions** deeply transforming rural and urban relationships and, as such, the food system.

 **Along with populations, poverty is also rising in cities.** Urbanisation has outpaced macro-economic growth in most low and middle-income countries. As a result, millions of people have failed to reap the benefits commonly associated with urban living, including better job opportunities, access to functional basic services and education. Although poverty continues to be more prevalent in rural areas, there are already

hundreds of millions of poor people living in cities, and urban poverty in absolute numbers is rising fast. Ninety-seven million people were pushed into extreme poverty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic according to the World Bank,⁵ with initial analysis across 110 countries estimating that the new poor are more likely to live in urban areas, and work in non-agricultural labour such as the informal sector, construction and manufacturing.⁶


 **Economic, social and spatial inequalities are increasing and more prevalent in cities.** Cities are more unequal than rural areas.⁷ For more than two-thirds of the world's urban population or roughly 2.9 billion people, income inequality has increased since 1980.⁸ Urban inequality has social, political, economic and spatial dimensions. For example, people's characteristics, such as sex, age, dis/ability, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, expression or sex characteristics, can dictate how much they can earn and where they can settle in the city, and in turn this location can influence the employment opportunities and services they have access to. These dynamics tend to cluster vulnerable populations in disadvantaged locations, with the most common example being slums and informal settlements.⁹

Figure 1.1 - Inter-related factors impacting food security and nutrition in urban areas.



4 UN DESA, 2019.

5 Gerszon Mahler et al., 2022.

6 WB, 2020, p.11.

7 UN DESA, 2020, p.108.

8 UN-Habitat, 2020.

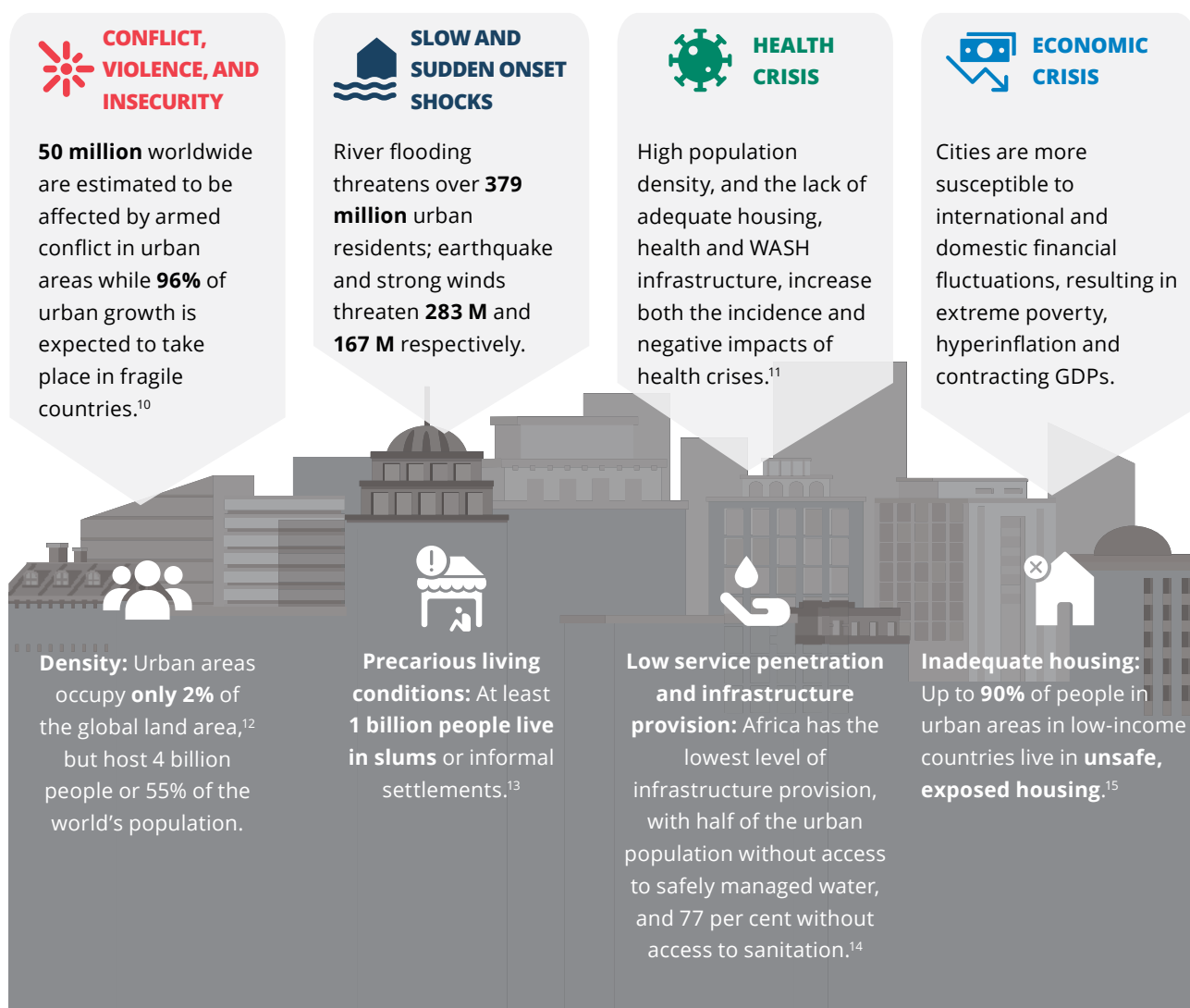
9 At least 1 billion of the urban population live in precarious conditions in slums or informal settlements, with 80 per cent attributed to three regions: Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (370 million), sub-Saharan Africa (238 million) and Central and Southern Asia (227 million). An estimated 3 billion people will require adequate and affordable housing by 2030.

Urban exclusion and marginalisation are also difficult to identify, as they can be a result of social and cultural norms, institutional discrimination and/or unequal distribution of power and resources. The result is a large urban population that has limited opportunities, lacks access to basic services, and has limited purchasing power, and therefore is more likely to be hungry or malnourished, and less able to manage risk and absorb shocks.

 **Urbanisation is leading to the spatial concentration of risks and compounded vulnerability.** The rapid and often unplanned expansion of urban areas, coupled with population

growth and increased density, is leading to the **spatial concentration of risks in cities** (Fig. 1.2). People's exposure to conflict, climate, economic, or health-induced risks increases when living in informal or precarious housing situations, where multiple hazards and vulnerabilities overlap and reinforce one another. These shocks, sometimes happening at the same time, also place an immense strain on already weakened infrastructure, trade and local systems (including supply chains), weak local economies, resource-constrained local governments and poor urban populations.

Figure 1.2 - The spatial concentration of risks in urban areas



10 ICRC, 2015

11 This is exemplified by outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera or typhoid in urban areas, the role that crowded urban areas played in the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and more recently the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 in urban areas where 90% of cases are from cities.

12 UN-Habitat, 2020, p. xix.

13 UN-Habitat, 2020

14 WHO and UNICEF, 2021

15 UNDRR, 2015



Rapid and unplanned urbanisation is resulting in land and nutrition transitions:

- **The nutrition transition:** Urbanisation is changing food supply, food environments¹⁶ and consumer behaviours. Nutrition is shifting from traditional diets to those with less fibre and nutrients and more calories, sugar and saturated fats. Consumption of processed food has increased annually by 5.45 percent in middle-income countries alone.¹⁷ This new and evolving (urban) food environment is creating a dichotomy where hunger and nutritional deficiencies coexist with obesity, sometimes within the same household. For example, living in an urban area has been associated with an increase in overweight women in several countries,¹⁸ while one in three children living in urban areas are stunted,¹⁹ a figure that rises to 54 percent in low-income families. This has resulted in a 'triple burden' of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity) that is interrelated with urbanisation, commercialisation, accessibility and affordability of healthy food, and as such is increasingly an issue for urban populations.²⁰
- **Rapid urbanisation is transforming rural and urban relationships:** Rural and urban areas have always been mutually reinforcing, including through a two-way flow of

people, goods and services. The urbanisation megatrend, however, is changing those relationships, with important repercussions for productive land, and thus for food security and nutrition. 30 million hectares of global croplands are expected to be lost by 2030 due to urban expansion and encroachment. 80 percent of this loss will take place in Asia and Africa.²¹ Additional stresses on productive land also come from the lack of investment in agricultural systems, environmental degradation, rural-to-urban migration, as well as climate shocks. While productive land and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and other value chain actors are threatened, the demand for food is expected to exponentially rise, with 70 percent of food supply already consumed by urban dwellers.²²

Taken together, the urbanisation megatrend, the prevalence of poverty and inequality in cities, the concentration of risk in dense urban spaces, and the land and nutrition transitions, are driving an increase in the **absolute numbers** of poor, hungry and malnourished people in cities than in rural areas. Effectively, these trends make the urban environment a crucial operational context to achieve zero hunger for a large percentage of the global population.

BOX 1.1 DEFINING "URBAN"

There is no universal definition of an "urban area". Official national definitions vary widely as each country may use different factors to designate a human settlement as an urban or rural area, such as minimum population size, provision of infrastructure and services, or economic function. To support international comparisons, the UN statistical commission recently developed the 'Degree of Urbanisation'²³ method, which categorises human settlements based on the spatial concentration of the population. This produces three categories:

- **Cities**, which have a population of at least 50,000 inhabitants in contiguous dense grid cells (>1,500 inhabitants per km²);
- **Towns and semi-dense areas**, which have a population of at least 5,000 inhabitants in contiguous grid cells with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km²; and
- **Rural areas**, which consist mostly of low-density grid cells.

Since the definition of urban varies from country to country, WFP's urban engagement will aim to align with the national definitions and government structures. The problem statement and urban framework presented in this strategy, however, builds primarily on an analysis of how the basic dimensions (or systems)²⁴ commonly found in cities have a distinctive effect on the availability, access, utilisation and sustainability of food security and nutrition. This distinctiveness can come from fundamental differences between urban and rural areas (cities' reliance on a cash-based economy versus rural markets dominated by agriculture and production), or from elements that are common to both rural and urban areas but that are amplified in the latter due to their physical scale (the man-made environment such as housing, public and recreational buildings), or their complexity (i.e., the interconnectedness of service infrastructure).

16 Food environments are the context in which people make decisions about the food they acquire, prepare and consume, based on aspects like accessibility, affordability, and desirability of food. As such, food environments shape what people can and want to eat and buy.

17 World Bank, FAO, 2018, p.16

18 Goryakin and Suhrcke 2014; Goryakin et al. 2015; MQSUN 2016;

19 IFPRI, 2017

20 Lintelo, et al. 2021

21 Bren d'Amour et al. 2017

22 FAO 2017

23 European Commission – Eurostat, DG for Regional and Urban Policy, ILO, FAO, OECD, UN-Habitat, World Bank, 2020

24 Campbell, 2016

1.2 Who is at risk of hunger and malnutrition in urban areas and why



The urban poor. Life in cities is expensive, and people are almost entirely dependent on the cash-based economy. Faced with limited resources, poor urban households have to prioritize between competing essential needs, including rent, healthcare, school fees and food. Without stable income sources and considering that urban households can spend more than 50 percent of their budgets on food (up to 75 percent in low-income countries),²⁵ the urban poor are likely not able to consistently meet their food demands. They are also more likely to be in debt due to low wages, unemployment and the casual nature of jobs. Less healthy foods are often cheaper and are widely available and advertised in urban areas, resulting in poor dietary diversity among the urban poor that cannot access healthier options. This puts **insufficient and unstable income at the core of urban food insecurity and malnutrition in urban areas.**

Despite the increase of urban poverty, social protection coverage is higher in rural than urban areas by 10 percentage points, across all regions and all country income groups,²⁶ driven partly by past assumptions that poverty is a rural phenomenon. The informal nature of employment in urban areas also deprives a large percentage of workers from formal social safety nets and insurance. Globally, an average of 50 percent of the urban workforce is engaged in the informal sector, with no or limited access to social protection. This figure rises to a staggering 87 per cent in South Asia.²⁷

However, the realities of hunger in a city can take many shapes and forms, according to sex, age, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, expression or sex characteristics. The largest groups and how they might experience or be at risk of hunger and malnutrition are described below:



The differential experience of poor urban women and girls: In 2020, moderate or severe food insecurity was more prevalent in women than in men globally by 10 percentage points, increasing

dramatically by 4 percentage points since 2019.²⁸ In cities, women's ability to meet their food and essential needs is affected by discrimination in accessing housing, exposure to sexual and gender-based violence, conflicts between traditional gender roles and out-of-home employment, and overall, their less secure jobs (compared to their male counterparts). 75 percent of women are involved in the informal sector, often with precarious working conditions and low wages. Time-consuming activities, such as care and domestic responsibilities including food preparation and water collection in areas with low service penetration²⁹ leave little time for stable income-generating activities.



An increasing, but disenfranchised young urban population: 60 percent of urban populations will be under the age of 18 by 2030. The economic opportunities that cities could bring for this growing young population have not been fulfilled. Informal employment is the main source of employment for youth across all regions where WFP operates, with an average of 60 percent, and increasing to a staggering 81 and 75 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia respectively.³⁰ Although informal employment provides sources of income, it often means youth are not covered by social safety nets or labour rights, making jobs unstable, casual and badly paid. As a result, urban youth struggle to earn a living and secure stable income, and thus, are unable to consistently meet their needs in a cash-based economy. This also has implications for the social and political stability of countries, especially low-income and fragile states.³¹

25 GAIN 2020

26 Gentilini, Khosla, Almenfi, 2021. Based on data from 106 countries.

27 Source: World Bank JOIN/I2D2 database (April 2020)

28 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO 2021

29 For example, women and girls are responsible for water collection in 80 percent of the urban households without access to water on premises (ibid), such as those found in slums.

30 ILO, 2017

31 WB, 2021



Stunting in children is increasingly urban: An important decline of 32 percent in child stunting was achieved in developing countries, mostly in rural areas, between 1985 and 2011.³² Meanwhile, in urban areas, stunting increased by 8 percent during the same period, with one in three stunted children now living in urban areas, and rates increasing to 30 percent in some low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).³³ Children in poorer urban households have a higher risk of being stunted, compared to those of high socioeconomic status. In several countries, the rate of stunting in children living in slums is even higher than in rural areas.³⁴ Children's malnutrition and deficiencies in nutrients is not only affected by intrahousehold dynamics and purchasing power, but also by the unsanitary living conditions that are more common in low-income settlements and slums, making hygiene practices and food safety more difficult to secure.



The urbanisation of displacement. Displaced populations are increasingly concentrating in cities, with 60 per cent of the 26 million refugees,³⁵ and two out of three internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in urban areas. What's more, a significant percentage of the forcibly displaced gravitate to informal settlements,³⁶ enjoying limited livelihood opportunities and access to services in a similar way as other vulnerable urban populations, in addition to their own barriers based on status such as lack of government-issued identity, stigma and discrimination, among others.



Inequalities along ethnic and social lines are prevalent in cities, affecting indigenous people and other marginalised groups.

Over 70 per cent of Indigenous peoples continue to live in rural areas worldwide, but many are increasingly migrating to urban areas³⁷ where they often end up segregated or settled in poorly-served and hazard-prone settlements.³⁸ This rural to urban shift also leads to change in diets, contributing to malnutrition and obesity.³⁹



32 IFPRI, 2017, p.26.

33 Ibid.

34 te Lintelo, et al. 2021

35 UNHCR, 2019, p.57.

36 Zetter and Deikun, 2011; McCallin and Scherer, 2015; Kirbyshire et al., 2017).

37 Indigenous people migrate to urban areas primarily in search of work or improved social services. Other factors such as dispossession of land, environmental degradation, displacement due to conflict and violence, and climate-induced disasters can also catalyse migration.

38 In Latin America for example Indigenous peoples make up more than half of urban dwellers at 52.2 per cent (ILO 2019) where they often end up residentially segregated with limited access to quality services.

39 A WFP-led assessment in five countries in Latin America noted that the Indigenous population that migrates to urban and peri-urban areas tends to consume ultra-processed food such as noodles, and canned foods, that are accessible and cheap instead of locally produced products. This trend contributes to malnutrition, obesity, and anaemia. Another assessment revealed that food insecurity is more pronounced in urban areas (59 per cent) than in rural areas (42.9 per cent) among Indigenous people surveyed in the Republic of Congo.

1.3 Opportunities to leverage in cities

Cities have always been places of opportunity and prosperity, offering a space for refuge and survival, as well as a space to grow and thrive. The same characteristics that attract people to cities, can also be leveraged to help WFP progress towards zero hunger in an urbanising world, with potential benefits across several programme areas. For example, the spatial concentration of economic activity and increased efficiency often found in urban areas can bring benefits for food systems functioning and value chain actors that can trickle all the way down to consumers, particularly those with less purchasing power. These benefits may include more accessible, healthier, and safer food, and greater financial inclusion for people affected by urban poverty. It is also beneficial to lump together infrastructure, services and an active labour market, combined with inclusive policies, to create opportunities to support human capital development and livelihoods on a larger scale. Urban areas also benefit from capacity and innovation. In contrast to rural areas, cities offer an opportunity to work with a wider range of actors (i.e., local governments, service providers, private-sector and civil society organizations) that bring technical expertise, networks and knowledge that can enhance programme quality and efficiency. Cities also offer opportunities to

advance **WFP's cross-cutting priorities**, including gender equality and accountability to affected populations. For example, cities offer more opportunities for upward mobility, access to markets, institutional services and social infrastructure, and more diverse and better job opportunities. WFP can leverage this environment to address the root causes of gender inequalities for urban women, tackle discrimination, and improve their well-being and their access to food and healthy diets. Cities can also be spaces for rebuilding the social contract and making institutions more accountable. For example, by helping local governments to increase collaboration and grow capacity – as local government is closer to the population than national government - WFP can promote greater accountability, inclusion and participation of communities through advocacy and policy support.

Although operating in urban areas may be more complex, greater density and concentration of affected populations can also result in reduced logistical and operational costs, even more so if collaborating with other actors, such as in cash transfers. Other operational and logistical benefits include the improved financial electronic infrastructure, better phone and internet coverage, as well as more financial service providers and capacitated cooperating partners.

1.4 Linkage with global commitments

The Sustainable Development Goals, notably SDG 2, guide the WFP Urban Strategy to end hunger and malnutrition as the world urbanises, and to ensure access by all people to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. SDG 17 in turn informs WFP's approach to work closely with and strengthen the respective capacities of national and local governments, as well as other actors working in urban areas including UN agencies, NGOs, private sector companies and academia. The Urban Strategy also contributes to achieving SDG 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. WFP's work in cities will help achieve the SDG 11 targets on ensuring access to adequate basic services, and reducing the number of deaths, affected people and direct economic losses from crises. Finally, the urban strategy connects with other SDGs, especially SDG 1, on reducing poverty and reaching the worst hit during crises and supporting nationally appropriate social protection systems; SDG 10 by reducing both inequalities and vulnerabilities within urban areas, and

SDG 5 by tackling discrimination and gender inequalities affecting urban women and girls. The urban strategy is also aligned with the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the 20-year global commitment towards sustainable urban development in all countries. The NUA recognises the linkages between good urbanisation and job creation, livelihood opportunities, and improved quality of life.⁴⁰ Both the urban strategy and the NUA aspire for integrated approaches to urbanisation and the inclusion of food security and the nutritional needs of urban residents, particularly those affected by poverty, within the overall urban development agenda. Finally, the Urban Strategy builds on various major global processes, including the UN system-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development, 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain, UN Decade for Action on Nutrition, the Committee on World Food Security, the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, the Sustaining Peace Resolutions, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

40 United Nations 2017

2.

WFP's response in urban areas



2.1 Vision

The Urban Strategy reflects WFP's operational and strategic imperative to strengthen and systematise its ability to contribute to food security and nutrition outcomes in urban environments. As such, WFP's vision is that:

By 2030, vulnerable people in urban areas will have substantially increased their ability to meet their food, nutrition and associated essential needs, while becoming more empowered, and able to manage shocks in urban areas.

WFP will work towards this vision by taking stock of the root causes and drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition in urban areas and applying this knowledge to **enhance programmes, systems and partnerships** that foster an enabling environment to achieve zero hunger in urban contexts.

In the succeeding parts of the strategic framework, we set out our approach to achieving this vision. We articulate it by responding to four questions (chapters II and III respectively):

- What **priorities** for engagement will WFP pursue in the immediate and medium term in its support to vulnerable urban populations?
- **How** will we provide our support?
- What **actions** will we undertake?
- What **programmatic shifts** are needed to deliver on these priorities and actions?

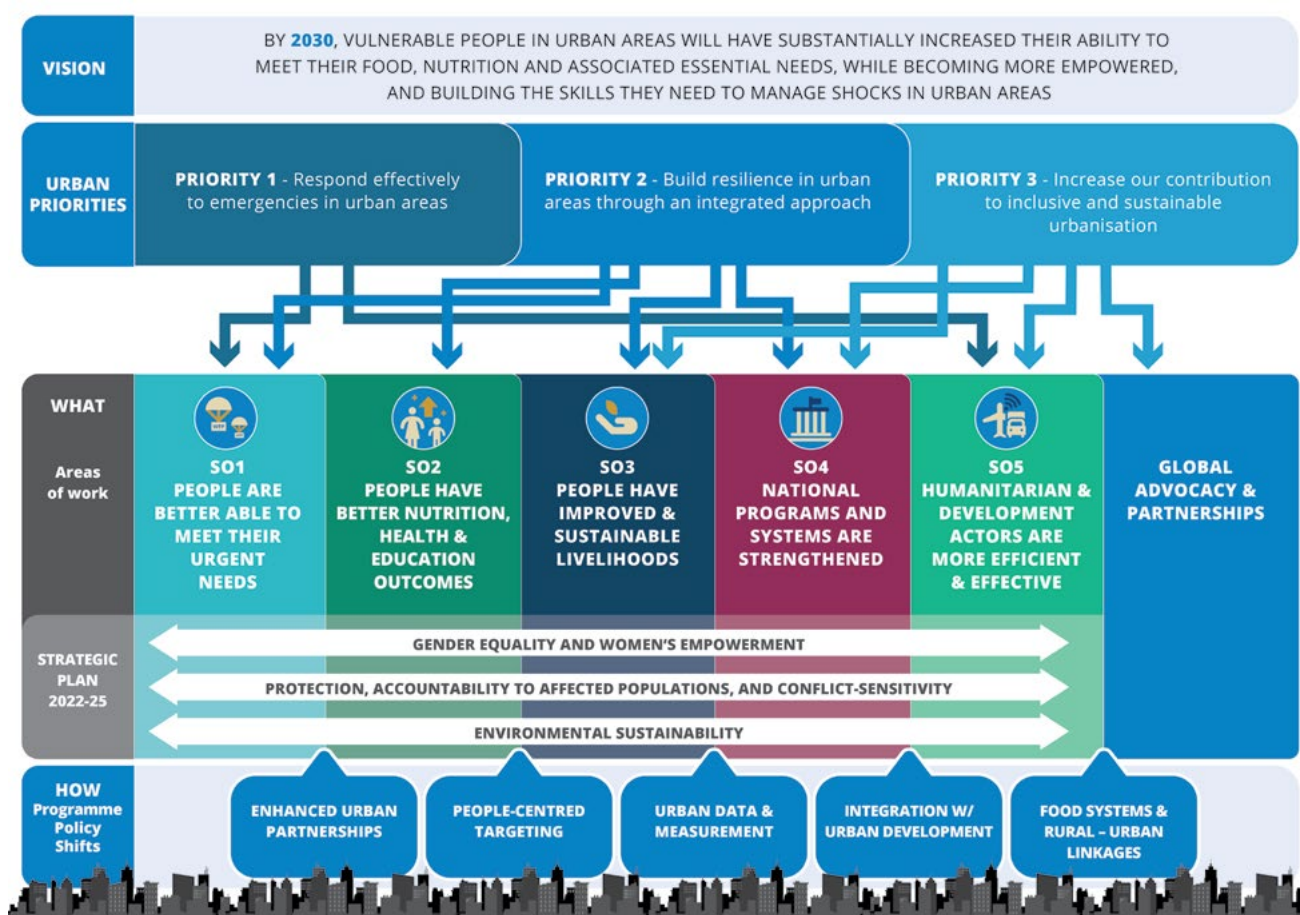


2.2 Urban priorities

Three distinct but interconnected priorities and respective entry points have been identified as critical to guide WFP's support to food-insecure populations in urban areas. These priorities address the challenges and opportunities of pursuing zero hunger in cities, the multidimensional vulnerability impacting the food security and nutrition of urban populations, as well as the programmatic areas where WFP is uniquely placed to act based on its mandate and role. Crucially, they also outline more ambitious medium-term objectives for which WFP can gradually enhance its capacity in order to contribute to longer term change and more inclusive and resilient urban areas.

These priorities, as well as the areas of work (section 2.4) are underpinned by WFP's cross-cutting issues of gender equality and women's empowerment, protection and accountability to affected populations, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), conflict sensitivity, and environmental sustainability as well as specific attention to groups at risk of being left behind in urban areas, including women, youth, displaced persons and persons with disabilities.

Figure 2.1 - Urban framework to achieve WFP's urban vision





PRIORITY I. RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY TO EMERGENCIES IN URBAN AREAS

WFP's laser-sharp focus on emergency response will remain its highest priority in urban areas, in line with WFP's strategic plan 2022-25. This strategy recognises that urban crises are becoming more frequent, complex and protracted in nature, and that urban areas are operational environments that require engagement with a more complex layer of actors, institutions and systems and different levels of capacity, compared to most rural areas. In this context, it is crucial that our services are **appropriate, scalable, replicable and efficient**. Below are our entry points for actions in the short and medium terms to respond effectively to urban emergencies.

First, WFP will work with and support the systems and actors already in place in urban areas to support the effective delivery of services during emergencies (including cash transfers, nutrition and school feeding services), and ensure these systems are shock-responsive and remain uninterrupted during crises. These systems include, but are not limited to, government-led social protection, health, emergency response and municipal systems. Direct implementation will be considered only when the existing systems are overwhelmed, or concrete gaps have been identified that can be filled with our capabilities and will be done in coordination with the broader humanitarian system.⁴¹

Because urban contexts often have functioning markets and access to financial services, WFP will leverage this added advantage to send people money so they can buy what they need, helping stimulate the demand and contributing to the local economy. In-kind food assistance will only be considered in situations where food systems have been disrupted by major shocks, with the expectation to swiftly shift this approach once systems have been restored. Through its response and capacity strengthening approaches, WFP can also contribute to a better integration between national and urban-level systems. The coverage and capacity of these systems will vary across countries and cities, for which WFP will adapt its role of technical advisor, service provider or direct implementing actor, as appropriate.

Cash-based assistance and support to **government-led social protection systems** particularly, provide a key entry point for WFP and governments to meet urgent needs of urban populations at a larger scale and

expand coverage in complex, dense and economically active urban areas. **Cash transfers** and the effective coverage of **shock-responsive** and **nutrition-sensitive** social protection systems therefore are key to ensure our contribution to SDG 2 during urban crises.

Second, WFP will proactively invest in urban preparedness as part of a longer-term agenda to build national and local capacities for response in urban areas. Preparedness pays off and paves the way for long term sustainability and less dependency on aid. Our support to urban crises, will be accompanied by efforts to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacities at the national, subnational and local level, particularly in highly vulnerable urban contexts that continuously face compounded risks. This is done on the premise that needs will exponentially increase as urban populations grow, as urban areas densify, and as shocks increase and compound. SO1 in section 2.4, outlines a range of actions WFP can implement to achieve this.



PRIORITY II. BUILDING RESILIENCE IN URBAN AREAS THROUGH AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FIT FOR URBAN CONTEXTS

WFP's approach to building resilience through integrated programming is a key entry point for intervening in urban areas, with its focus on building resilience capacities and addressing vulnerabilities of **people, communities, institutions and systems**. This approach lends itself to the complex and multi-layered nature of cities and the cash-based nature of the urban economy. However, the strategy also recognises that some of our existing resilience tools are **rural-centric** and we will need to invest in re-designing or further adapting these to the challenges of urban areas.

First, we will capitalise on our systems-strengthening expertise on social protection as a way to enhance preparedness and risk anticipation whilst helping build resilience. This is crucial to address clear gaps in coverage in urban areas and to support governments in establishing or strengthening social protection linkages with disaster risk management. This is in line with the New Urban Agenda which explicitly mentions the commitment to enhance social protection for people affected by urban poverty.

⁴¹ See the UN system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development - CEB/2019/1/Add.5

Second, we will adapt and expand our efforts in **building human capital** and **enhancing and diversifying livelihoods**, complemented with the integration of **financial inclusion and social and economic empowerment** across our cash transfer, social protection, food systems, and livelihood interventions.

In the medium term, we will invest in improving our ability to support **enabling environments** that promote income generation and livelihoods diversification, including by **leveraging the food system and rural-urban linkages** for nutrition outcomes and employment generation, and technical assistance to governments to develop inclusive social protection, more resilient food systems, and livelihood promotion policies in urban areas.



PRIORITY III. INCREASE OUR CONTRIBUTION TO INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION

This strategy recognises that social, spatial and economic inequalities⁴² are more pervasive in cities, and that these have a direct impact on whether different groups benefit from urban life, including with sustainable access to food, healthy diets and essential needs. As described in **Chapter I**, cities can also be places of opportunity and prosperity, spaces for rebuilding the social contract and making institutions more accountable. Urbanisation, when leveraged, can be a catalyst for bringing the services needed to live with dignity, including enough food and healthy diets, within reach of the most vulnerable or marginalised. The urban strategy, therefore, is the first step for WFP to build stronger linkages between its areas of work and wider urban development efforts, and be better prepared to address the increasing urbanisation trend and its impact in food security and nutrition in the decades ahead. The following immediate and medium-term entry points have been identified:

First, WFP will build upon its contribution to the implementation of the humanitarian, development, and peace Nexus, such as our work on strengthening national systems, our ability to layer humanitarian and development programming, our efforts to advance our contribution to peace and social cohesion, and our support for both humanitarian and development actors, including through cluster coordination and analytical

capabilities that contribute to the Common Country Analysis (CCA).

WFP will work with various stakeholders to generate evidence, achieve collective outcomes and ensure complementarity in their urban-focused efforts and programmes across the Nexus. This multi-layered approach will highlight the delivery of humanitarian assistance complemented by peace and social cohesion interventions and longer-term development and resilience programmes.

In the medium term, WFP will gradually increase its ability to leverage and contribute to urban and territorial development efforts. This strategy recognises that contributing to urban development efforts to address hunger and malnutrition in cities is a relatively new item on WFP's agenda. Efforts need to be pursued over many years and developed strategically and in a coordinated way. This will require an effort to understand the urban systems which our services may be complementing at the local and sub-national level, including urban policy, planning and budgeting processes, and the administrative set-up of local governments. With this clearer understanding and augmented capabilities, WFP will be able to contribute to the development of urban policy and spatial and planning instruments and support larger capacity strengthening efforts (for example promoting investments on food systems or infrastructure), that can have a longer term and larger-scale impact on food security and nutrition in urban areas.

Concrete interventions related to this priority are described in **section 2.4 (SO 3, 4 and 5)** as well as in our contributions to global advocacy and partnerships. Actions to engage more actively in urban development processes are included in **section 3.1**. Lastly, these efforts should be done in coordination and complementarity with UN agencies⁴³ and local actors, and according to WFP's Country Capacity Strengthening principles.

42 WFP, 2021

43 See the UN system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development - CEB/2019/1/Add.5

2.3 Modes of support

WFP's support will be delivered in a variety of ways and in different policy and programmatic areas (Fig. 2.2). The precise role WFP will take in each country will depend on what is needed, the government's priorities, the maturity of national and local systems, and the activities of other partners, as well as our own resources and capabilities in a country. Below the range of roles is briefly outlined, while more concrete areas of intervention across the corporate outcome areas for 2022-25 are described in **section 2.4**.

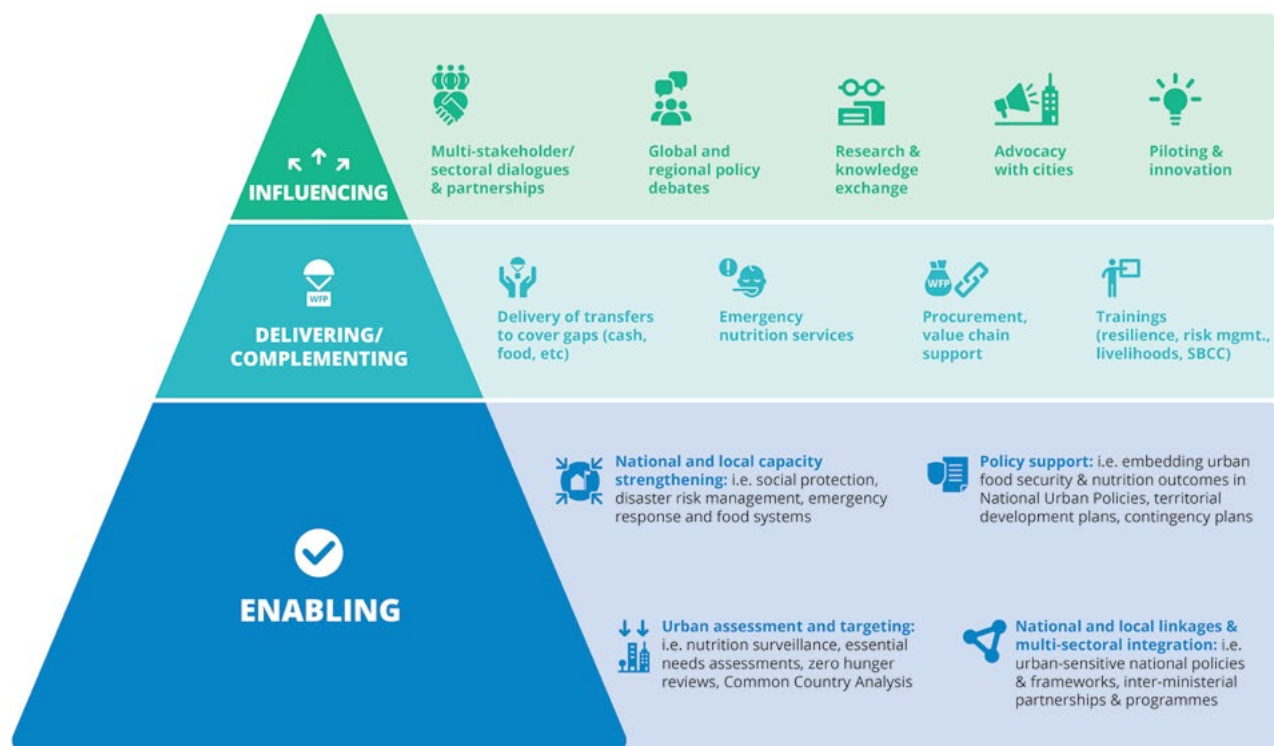
First, direct intervention in urban areas should not be assumed. In many of the contexts, our support will primarily take the form of an **enabling role**, working alongside, or on behalf of, government and other stakeholders, providing upstream technical support and capacity strengthening across programmes and policies relevant to urban areas. This may include policy and technical support for the inclusion of **urban data on food security and nutrition** in national urban policies, national baselines or surveillance systems; technical advice and guidance on implementing elements of social protection programmes in urban areas on government's

behalf, facilitating multi-sectoral partnerships and programmes, among others.

Second, in situations where major shocks disrupt national systems, where local actors are overwhelmed, or where lack of coverage is leaving vulnerable groups unassisted, we will play a **key delivering role**, implementing programmes such as cash transfers, emergency nutrition services, market-based and school-feeding programmes. In doing so, we will ensure that our direct interventions are time-bound, and done in complementarity or alignment with national, international and local efforts.

Third, in order to achieve its urban vision, WFP will need to take a **leading influencing role** to advocate for more attention, a better understanding, and an adequate and coordinated response to urban food security and nutrition in urban areas, including through evidence generation, facilitation of learning exchanges, engagement in high level debates and multi-stakeholder/sectoral dialogues, among others.

Figure 2.2 - Examples of roles that WFP may take in its response in urban areas

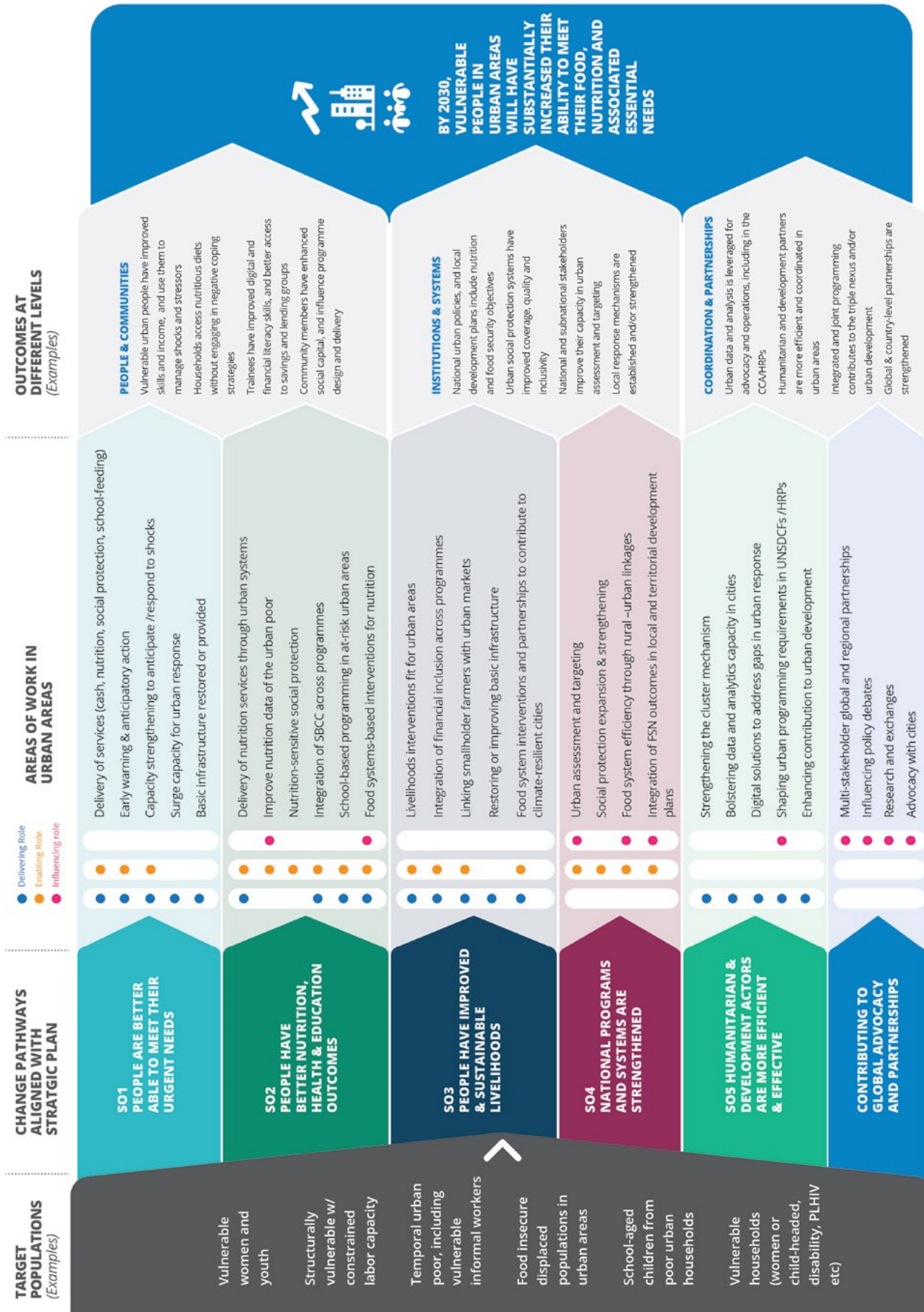


2.4 Areas of work

WFP's strategic direction and programmatic and policy offer in urban areas is grounded in, and directly aligned with, each of WFP's result areas as defined in the Strategic Plan 2022-25. This approach recognizes 'urban' as a key operational context where each of the corporate result areas can be pursued, providing WFP

with concrete change pathways in urban areas that can contribute to SDG2 and SDG17, and other SDGs, including SDG11, and global commitments. This approach will also support country offices in defining their role in urban interventions through an easier integration of urban programming into their Country Strategic Plans.







STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1. PEOPLE MEET THEIR URGENT FOOD AND NUTRITION NEEDS

The urban strategy is aligned with the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 in responding at the right time, in the right way, with the right people to restore access to food in urban areas in the face of climate hazards, conflict, economic recession, health-related emergencies and other shocks. To succeed in achieving this goal, WFP can focus its efforts on the following mutually reinforcing areas:

→ Deliver and complement emergency services effectively during urban crises

We will establish partnerships that promote complementarity, operational agility and cost-effectiveness in urban areas, and we will work in synergy and coordination with the broader humanitarian system. Our support and services during emergencies will include:

Cash transfers: WFP's services and technical support for cash-based assistance may include providing data and analysis on the needs and changing vulnerabilities arising from the crisis, and support in adapting or setting up digital delivery mechanisms (like mobile money or mobile banking). WFP can also support in determining the appropriate cash transfer value to avoid creating a push or pull effect on targeted affected populations, including by working within an established Cash Working Group to enhance coordination among humanitarian actors. Furthermore, WFP will prioritise transfer of digital money on digital financial accounts owned by the women and men we assist, to support their financial inclusion.

The need for expansion of **social protection systems** to cover vulnerable people in urban areas has never been more visible than in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. In support of governments as the largest providers of cash assistance in their own context, and in partnership with key actors in the UN and IFI system, WFP can complement and augment existing social protection systems, including shock-responsive, and can support transition to recovery and longer-term absorption of the newly vulnerable, in line with the modes for support defined in the WFP social protection strategy.⁴⁴

Emergency nutrition services: WFP can offer data and analytics expertise to help improve understanding of the urban food environment during and prior to crises, including analysis of prices and economic barriers to access food, and analysis of consumption patterns and risky behaviours in urban areas, to inform response as

well as preparedness measures. WFP can also provide support to scale-up interventions for individuals whose nutritional status has been affected by the emergency, delivering lifesaving information to hard-to-reach communities (including those in contested control) through SBCC campaigns, and coordinating with others, including UNICEF, on the joint delivery of integrated packages of school health and nutrition.

Market-based interventions to address food insecurity: In the aftermath of major shocks or disasters where food systems have been disrupted, WFP may complement its efforts with interventions that increase the affordability and physical availability of food in the most affected urban areas, including through market incentives for food retailers to set up outlets in or near affected areas. WFP may also address crucial gaps in the supply and storage for local markets by initially using in-kind assistance then switching to a market-based approach at the earliest opportunity in order to provide incentives for traders to promptly resume trade practices.

Capitalising on its supply chain capabilities, WFP can facilitate the rapid delivery of this assistance and adjust coverage, by pre-identifying potential bottlenecks across the supply chain through scenario building, in synergy with local contingency plans, and in collaboration with different government and community actors and platforms. In cases of access or mobility constraints, WFP can facilitate the rapid shift or adaptation of service delivery through alternative local channels and service providers to minimise disruptions in meeting urgent needs.

→ Invest in early warning systems linked to anticipatory and early action

Early warning systems are often national in nature and may need to be more "localised" to fit the information needs of cities and urban populations. Likewise, while emergency and contingency plans exist in many cities, they often have weak food security and nutrition components that are focused mostly on short-term sudden-onset hazards.

WFP can build on its past and current national and local emergency preparedness programmes to advance its efforts on anticipatory and early action in urban areas. It will play a crucial role in analysing urban food security and nutrition information by capitalising on available data and information; analysing capacity and response gaps; assessing localised risks and vulnerabilities adapted to the complexity of urban areas to help plan interventions; and supporting the development of emergency scenarios and contingency plans. The resulting scenarios and plans can form the foundations of appropriate early warning,

⁴⁴ WFP, 2021

anticipatory and early action efforts in cities as well as DRM plans, that other urban areas with similar conditions can replicate. When requested, WFP can strengthen early warning and early action capacities of cities where vulnerable and food insecure populations concentrate, by bolstering coordination with and among early-warning and early action partners to develop replicable early warning tools and platforms and providing early warning information to cities and communities where we operate. Similarly, WFP can prepare standby arrangements with strategic cities and link their early warning systems to appropriate local and/or national response bodies, especially the Local/National Disaster Management Organizations and Local/National Social Protection Systems, key actors like the private sector and other relevant mechanisms.

→ Build local emergency response capacities to better anticipate and respond to shocks

The overarching objective of this outcome is to reduce the dependence of cities on external assistance for shocks that they can manage, whenever possible. Urban actors are crucial in realising this goal as they are the “front line” when shocks impact their cities and communities. WFP can strengthen capacities on early action based on their respective development contexts, the shocks they face, and the food security and nutrition needs they have. WFP can also strengthen the capacities of local governments to drive operations, community engagement and provision of assistance in a more efficient and less resource-intensive way, especially in the areas of disaster management and social protection. While linking local and national actors (e.g., in civil-military coordination), WFP can support the establishment and strengthening of local response mechanisms and help to identify the triggers that activate these before or during crises. It can likewise contribute to build the shock responsiveness of various city-level systems, especially their social protection mechanisms, to better respond to the shock vulnerabilities present in urban areas.

→ Capacitate local authorities, civil society and communities to ensure that services reach those most at need or left behind during crises

WFP can play a key role in capacitating and empowering local authorities, civil society groups and community members so that they can enable and support other urban actors within the city at large, as well as other cities and neighbouring municipalities to jointly prepare for and respond to various forms of natural and man-made shocks and crises. This can be done by:

- Strengthening local capacities on supply chain planning in urban areas.

- Transferring relevant skills (e.g., targeting) and establishing the right platforms based on the needs and context of the city.
- Establishing or supporting community-based mechanisms particularly in hazard-prone and vulnerable settlements.
- Learning from and working with local actors that have responded to previous crises.
- Providing support in developing harmonised risk communication strategies that can be activated in emergency situations, in synergy with government and/or local actors.
- Facilitating the participation of communities and other local actors in programme design and implementation to enhance access to hard-to-reach populations, including in controlled areas.
- Facilitating joint planning of a group of adjacent local governments within a high-risk/ hazard-prone territory.

While performing these roles, WFP, together with government partners and other UN agencies, will aim to further strengthen the linkages of its urban preparedness and response work to the wider disaster risk management framework (i.e., disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery) and the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus.

→ Deploy an enhanced and tailored surge capacity to respond to large-scale urban-based shocks and challenges

While the overarching strategy is to build the cities’ internal capabilities, their ability to capacitate others, and the ability to respond to shocks with much less dependence on external support, there will be shocks whose scale will be beyond their regions or country’s respective capacities. Such situations will require deployment of SURGE personnel from WFP and other humanitarian organizations in urban areas. To prepare for the eventuality of surge deployments and interventions in urban crises, WFP will further refine its SOPs, training materials and field level tools to incorporate the complexities of operating in urban areas and deploying resources aiming to be fit for purpose to specific urban contexts, when needed.

→ Play a role in interventions focused on urban community assets and basic infrastructure

In the crisis context, WFP can explore interventions aimed at restoring or rehabilitating critical assets and basic infrastructure, such as roads, to help restore access to nutritious food in urban communities, revive

affected urban livelihoods and support the recovery of the urban community. As a broad approach to respond to the complexities of urban areas, such interventions will consider the appropriate HLP mechanisms, development, infrastructure, slum upgrading, recovery and other long-term plans that govern cities and aim to reduce the vulnerability of communities, informal settlements and underserved areas to future shocks.

To empower local actors, WFP will identify, tap into or contract local planners, engineers and professionals, including women, use locally sourced materials when possible and work with UN Agencies and other partners that work on such development projects. Then subsequently, these strategic interventions will be guided by multisectoral information, including pre-crisis data, on access, availability, reliability and quality of services, pre-identify underserved areas and pockets of deprivation and risk.



STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2. PEOPLE HAVE BETTER NUTRITION, HEALTH AND EDUCATION OUTCOMES

Several vulnerable groups concentrate in urban areas that fail to meet their nutrition, health, and education outcomes. These groups include people employed in the informal sector or that rely on other precarious sources of income, female- or children-headed households, migrants, displaced populations, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, and school-aged children, particularly those living in slums. Many of them concentrate in underserved or informal areas living side by side and are often marginalized and/or invisible in data. WFP will work with partners to *save* and *change* lives, including **addressing structural vulnerabilities and building human capital** in urban areas. A particular focus will be made in the following key issues: the lack of data that accurately captures the nutritional status of vulnerable groups in urban areas,⁴⁵ the triple-burden of malnutrition increasingly becoming an urban problem, and the links between health and nutrition outcomes and the deficient infrastructure and unequal service provision in cities, among others. To address these challenges in urban areas, WFP can focus its efforts on the following mutually reinforcing areas:

→ Improve health and nutrition outcomes through social protection policies and programmes

WFP can support government partners⁴⁶ in designing and implementing nutrition-sensitive social protection policies, programmes and services. This includes integrating nutrition-related objectives and goals into regulatory frameworks and identifying the nutritionally vulnerable groups that are being left behind in urban areas. WFP can also use market analysis to help governments set adequate transfer values that promote people's ability to obtain enough healthy food. WFP will also strive to better connect its work on food system strengthening with its support for social protection programmes, by improving people's access to, and demand for nutritional products through its expertise on data, supply chain and value chain development. In line with the Social Protection Strategy, WFP can also assist programmes that aim to reduce multidimensional poverty more broadly in urban contexts where food insecurity and malnutrition are threatened. Examples could be programmes that promote human capital development, and income generation or diversification, and designing objectives that contribute to reducing gender gaps and promote women and youth empowerment.

→ Improve data and analysis on the nutritional status and dietary intake of affected populations in urban areas

WFP can use its comparative advantage on data and analytics, including the deployment of Fill the Nutrient Gap (FNG), to provide support in improving national health and nutrition surveillance in urban areas through capacity strengthening and technical support. Priority will be given to leveraging national/official statistics and other existing secondary data, while generating new data only when key gaps are identified. These efforts can be accompanied by direct contributions to the Country Common Analysis, and better coordination with the UNCT/UNHCT to leverage other stakeholders' data and analytics. This enhanced evidence and capability can promote government ownership and responsibility in addressing critical nutrition challenges in urban areas, while the new evidence generated can increase international awareness and support resource mobilisation. Key technical support and services to enhance data and analysis can include, among others:

- Adapting rural-centric food security and nutrition analysis and tools to urban environments.

⁴⁵ There are several reasons for this, including inadequacy of metrics and tools to measure urban food security and nutrition, intra-urban disparities being masked by national averages in official statistics, and informal settlements being excluded from sampling frames due to political or financial reasons.

⁴⁶ Concrete areas for capacity and system strengthening on social protection, are detailed further in result area 4.

The food environment in cities is more complex and less understood than in rural areas. For example, cities offer more unhealthy food options, and the larger presence of mass media, the informal food sector, and supermarkets influences what people purchase and consume.

- Identifying urban hotspots where nutritionally vulnerable populations concentrate and where lack of access to health services is a concern.
- Filling data gaps on underserved areas where food security and malnutrition may be a concern, but data is poor quality or insufficient, such as in informal settlements.
- Supporting the establishment of community-based surveillance systems and the use of digital technologies to address the data gaps on the nutrition status of urban populations.

Lastly, in contrast to rural areas, the **urban food environment** is more complex and layered, and less understood, yet it plays an important role in enabling or restricting healthy dietary choices. **WFP can contribute to building evidence on the urban food environment**, including analysis on prices and economic barriers to food, consumption patterns and risky behaviours in urban areas.

→ Support government and communities in delivering and improving nutrition services through the existing health and education systems in urban areas

WFP can work through national and local governments, and social and community structures to contribute to more effective and inclusive nutrition services in urban areas. Priority will be given to strengthening the health, education and social protection systems, so that these are more **nutrition-sensitive** and better prepared for emergencies and disruptions. Support can include:

- Building institutional capacity of service providers in the health and education sector on the integration of nutrition-sensitive approaches and prevention measures in their plans, programmes and activities. Service providers may include ministry and local government actors, health workers, teachers and caregivers.
- Strengthening the linkages between the health system and local service provision networks and programmes at municipal and community levels, including local referral systems, distribution centres, school-based platforms, and healthcare providers, particularly those serving the most vulnerable and marginalised groups, and underserved urban areas such as informal settlements.
- Promoting and supporting relevant **community-based management** mechanisms in collaboration with relevant ministries and local government, to ensure a **sustainable continuum of care** that is sensitive to

the circumstances of carers in urban areas, particularly women and those living in informal settlements.

→ Enhance the use of social and behavioural change (SBC) strategies in programme design in urban areas

Social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) strategies are essential to promote healthy behaviours and diets, empower consumers and influence household consumption. WFP will enhance the design and promote the use of SBC strategies across its urban programmes and in the technical support provided to partners in urban areas.

WFP will invest in developing research, community engagement tools, and training packages, and establishing the right partnerships to effectively deliver SBC interventions in urban contexts, in order to reach different target populations in urban areas, identify preferred communication channels and sources, and design engaging and appropriate content and materials. WFP will aim to make the best use of the resources available in urban areas to disseminate information and campaigns to large amounts of people, including marginalised groups. These resources include multiple communication channels and types of media (including TV, radio and social media platforms), technologies (mobile and digital), actors (private sector, civil society and community-based organizations and platforms), as well as mobility and recreational infrastructure that gathers large amounts of people (parks, public spaces, markets and transport facilities).

WFP can also explore partnerships with urban actors and practitioners active in urban design, urban planning and place-making, to pilot social and behavioural change interventions that use the spatial and physical components of the city, such as public spaces and recreational facilities to reach diverse groups and areas across the city.

→ Pilot interventions and partnerships that make use of the food system to improve nutrition outcomes in urban areas

WFP will invest in developing research, piloting interventions and establishing partnerships to better leverage food systems and actors to achieve nutrition outcomes in urban areas. This can include, among others:

- support in building evidence on how markets and the food system across the rural and urban continuum affect diet affordability and quality in cities.
- support in identifying entry points for interventions and partnerships along the value chains that improve the supply and affordability of healthy food products.
- partnering with the private sector on food fortification and its commercialisation (such as labelling, marketing and pricing), and working with retailers and distributors to influence behaviours and consumption patterns.

- strengthening rural-urban food supply chains to ensure an increased and sustainable supply of nutritious foods into urban areas.
- working with government partners to influence the retail food environment through regulatory frameworks and enhancement of national standards.

→ **Support the integration of nutrition-strengthening activities in complementary sectors such as WASH, and urban planning interventions**

Poor sanitation and unclean water are associated with 50 percent of undernutrition.⁴⁷ Overcrowding and inadequate housing are common in informal settlements, affecting how the urban households prepare and consume their food, exposing them to food contamination, and impacting their capacity to absorb nutritional components. The lack of energy access and suitable options for storage and transport in turn influences purchasing patterns, pushing affected urban households into buying longer shelf-life products instead of fresh produce they cannot properly store. Acknowledging the crucial role that the WASH sector and the built environment of cities play in nutrition and health outcomes, WFP can establish cross-sectoral partnerships to promote more complementarity between nutrition programming and the improvement of WASH infrastructure, energy access, and market facilities in disadvantaged and underserved urban areas. WFP can build capacity and advocate with relevant local actors and UN agencies to ensure that preventive programmes on behavioural change, caring and hygiene practices are integrated into sectoral urban interventions that improve water and sanitation, educational facilities, housing and public space.

→ **Provide support in strengthening nationally-owned school meal systems⁴⁸ that address the nutritional needs of urban children**

WFP will work through national and local systems and actors to identify key gaps and the most strategic locations⁴⁹ for strengthening, improving or scaling-up (home-grown) school-feeding programmes, considering the urban-specific vulnerabilities and the social, economic and spatial inequalities impacting poor urban children

Overcrowding, inadequate housing, sanitation, and lack of energy access affect how urban populations prepare and consume their food, exposing them to food contamination and restricting the products that they can buy.

and their families. Building on its comparative added value in national capacity and systems strengthening, WFP can build capacity of government actors and support community-based management mechanisms to plan for effective transition strategies and any financial challenges associated with running and maintaining school-feeding programmes in resource-constrained urban environments such as informal or low-income settlements.

WFP can also **leverage the food system** and its experience in value chain development to design school-feeding programmes that can also provide local business opportunities, improve linkages between rural production and urban demand for food, and enhance the food environment around schools. This may include linking the school's food demand to smallholder farmers in surrounding peri-urban or rural areas and linking the preparation demand to local distributors and catering businesses, particularly those led by women. Whenever possible, WFP can link school-feeding programmes to local slum-upgrading or placemaking interventions implemented by government or other partners, to promote complementarity and sustainability of efforts and successful exit strategies.



**STRATEGIC OUTCOME 3.
PEOPLE HAVE IMPROVED
AND SUSTAINABLE
LIVELIHOODS**

WFP's approach to improving the livelihoods of food insecure or at-risk urban populations will be adapted to the realities of urban areas and their cash-based economies, with an emphasis on working through existing systems and building partnerships to deliver livelihood interventions that are fit for an urban context. This will be complemented with efforts to adapt its expertise on FFA to cities, when appropriate, and efforts to explore and pilot interventions that leverage the food system for income generation. WFP can also endeavour to adopt a role in influencing climate-oriented interventions through closer engagement with territorial actions and partnerships with local government actors and networks.

→ **Build human capital through livelihood interventions that allow an uninterrupted access to basic food, nutrition and associated essential needs**

WFP can focus its efforts on creating and diversifying livelihoods opportunities and networks to reduce the financial burden of food insecure people in urban areas, allowing them an uninterrupted access to basic needs and healthy diets.

⁴⁷ WHO, 2008

⁴⁸ WFP is a member of the School Meals Coalition, an emerging initiative of governments and a wide range of partners to drive actions that can urgently re-establish, improve and scale up food and education systems, support pandemic recovery and drive actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Coalition will support governments and their partners to improve the quality of school meals and strengthen school meal systems globally, in a manner which is tailored to local contexts and which promotes the sharing of international best practices.

⁴⁹ For example, using data on enrolment and completion rates, food security and nutrition status, gender disparities, concentration of marginalized populations such as displaced and undocumented migrants, as well as a data on the spatial and environmental conditions of urban settlements.

WFP can collaborate with government and private sector actors to identify opportunities for remunerated jobs across the value chain (in the production, storage, distribution and retailing sectors), through new techniques, or through the opportunities created by digital technologies.

To achieve this, we can build in our experience on Food for Training (FTT) and corporate initiatives such as EMPACT, that promote youth employment and build the human, social and financial capital of its participants. We will establish partnerships to offer training and support for non-agricultural life skills (literacy, numeracy, digital capacity) and diverse livelihood capacities (entrepreneurship and technical training in diverse trades), while also facilitating access to capital, banking services, networks and information. We can also promote cash transfers as a safety net that gives stability within often unstable and informal urban job sectors. Strengthening and developing new **partnerships with the private sector** will be crucial to support market development and inclusive business practices, including setting up apprenticeships and developing feasible routes for career development and absorption into the job market.

As urban contexts are predominantly unequal, livelihood interventions in urban areas will need to consider the social barriers that hinder employment opportunities for specific groups. WFP may establish partnerships with local actors and service providers to integrate gender transformative and/or social empowerment components into the design of livelihood interventions. Similarly, it can integrate components that facilitate access to information and that improve social capital and networks, particularly among women, youth and displaced populations.

Livelihood interventions in urban areas should embed a conflict and protection-sensitive approach in programme design, and emphasise a participatory approach that ensures that the needs, barriers and aspirations of the affected populations are reflected in the training and skills development offer. Likewise, livelihoods programmes will be designed based on adequate market analysis to provide insights into the local economy, the informal sector, and any labour market discrimination and long-term disadvantages that may affect the impact or scale-up of the intervention.

Building on its work on food system strengthening and value chain development, WFP can also collaborate with government and private sector actors to identify opportunities for **remunerated jobs across the value chain** (in the production, storage, distribution and retailing sectors), through new techniques, or through the opportunities created by digital technologies.

→ **Linking smallholder farmers, especially women and youth, with the increasing urban demand for food**

There are over 500 million smallholder farmer households worldwide producing most of the food consumed globally. Despite this fundamental role in the value chain, they continue to fail to fairly benefit from market engagement. With 70 percent of the food produced being consumed by urban dwellers (a figure that will rise to 80 percent by 2050), there is untapped and promising potential to improve cities and food systems and thereby the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, particularly women, by connecting them to the increasing urban demand for food.

With 70 percent of the food produced being consumed by urban dwellers, there is untapped potential to work with food systems and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, particularly women, by connecting them to the increasing urban demand for food.

Building on its expertise on supply chain, value chain development, food system strengthening, and Smallholder Agricultural Market Support (SAMS), WFP can equip smallholder farmers in peri-urban and adjacent rural areas with the knowledge and tools to boost productivity and efficiently link their produce with processors and urban markets. This includes skills development in communication, marketing and financial literacy, and incentives for the adoption of technology (i.e., mobile communication, among others) and modern inputs. This may also include collaboration with the private sector to strengthen input supply, to improve cold chains and to ensure that producers have reliable access to appropriate financial services, including credit and insurance. Through direct buying schemes, procurement and inclusive and shorter value chains, WFP can also promote more direct linkages between smallholder farmers and the wider market in urban areas, as well as with WFP's own programming, such as school feeding and cash-based interventions. With women comprising almost half of the smallholder farmers in developing countries, these interventions will be designed with a gender transformative approach that responds to the specific social norms and structural barriers that impede women's access to credit, assets, education, technology and land rights.

Lastly, we will explore opportunities to engage with territorial development efforts and provide support to national and local governments on policy development and strategy to improve links between smallholder farmers and urban markets.

→ **Integrate financial inclusion in our programming in urban areas, to increase people's ability to manage financial risks in urban environments**

As the largest cash actor globally, WFP is in a good position to deliver or enable interventions that promote economic empowerment and financial inclusion of vulnerable and

unbanked populations in urban areas, particularly women who are often left behind by formal financial institutions and channels. In partnership with private sector and other partners, WFP will invest in integrating financial inclusion interventions across its programmes and technical support in urban areas. This may include the delivery of training on digital and financial literacy skills, facilitating access to financial services and the use of technology, or support for strengthening community-based savings and lending groups. A particular emphasis will be made on applying a gender transformative approach, so that interventions contribute to building the agency and decision-making power of urban women and enhance their control over financial resources.

As the largest cash actor globally, WFP is in a good position to enable interventions that promote economic empowerment and financial inclusion of vulnerable and unbanked populations in urban areas, particularly women.

To effectively support financial inclusion in urban areas, WFP will partner with diverse actors, including private sector, government, financial service providers, cooperatives and community-based savings groups.⁵⁰ For example, in situations of marginalization and institutional discrimination, WFP may need to partner with others to facilitate support and advocacy to address institutional challenges that impede vulnerable groups in accessing financial instruments, particularly for displaced populations.

→ **Support communities in identifying, building and managing basic infrastructure that reduces exposure to shocks in urban areas**

WFP can support communities in building or improving basic infrastructure that can help decrease their exposure to risks from climate and other hazards, improve the local economy and/or catalyse the development of dense and at-risk peri-urban areas and slums. This can include rehabilitating basic services infrastructure and improving delivery, particularly when access to nutritious food and recovery of livelihoods is being directly affected by the reliability, access and quality of urban services. Infrastructure interventions will be anchored in strong partnerships and systemic engagements with governments, and a participatory approach engaging civil society and community actors, including with the planning of activities and interventions. Using context and policy analysis and risk assessment, WFP can ensure that interventions incorporate the local politics and relations between landscapes and urban livelihoods, as well as the context-specific shocks and the bio-physical characteristics of the city. Through effective partnerships with local governments and other local actors with strong knowledge of the social, political and spatial dynamics, careful analysis and risk

management will be made to anticipate and minimise unintended consequences of infrastructure interventions such as increases in rent, and other push and pull factors these might create in the neighbourhoods and wider area.

→ **Contribute to building climate-resilient cities by leveraging the food system and engaging urban actors as part of the climate solution**

Backed by strong analysis of climate-related urban food security data, WFP can help build the resilience of urban food systems and the urban-rural continuum from the current and projected impacts of climate change by strengthening relevant urban plans and implementing joint urban climate resilience programmes with relevant local, national and international actors. WFP can complement its adaptation-focused and resilience-based efforts with actions aimed at increasing access to energy, especially clean energy, nature-based solutions and other climate mitigation interventions in cities. As cities are a major source of global food waste which turns into greenhouse gas GHG emissions, a strong advocacy from WFP's global, regional, national and field offices to reduce food waste, as well as related programmes and activities in urban areas can make a difference. Finally, WFP will explore opportunities and partnerships on climate risk financing aimed towards bolstering its climate change adaptation efforts in urban areas where vulnerable and food insecure populations concentrate.



STRATEGIC OUTCOME 4. NATIONAL AND LOCAL PROGRAMMES AND SYSTEMS ARE STRENGTHENED

Rapid urbanisation is outpacing the ability of local governments to plan for, and adequately serve their growing urban populations. Governments often find themselves with limited resources and strained capabilities, against the increasing needs of affected populations in urban areas. WFP can support local and national actors in being more accountable to their affected urban populations by being better equipped to understand food security and nutrition challenges in urban areas, and effectively deliver services and programmes to address them. Through its response, WFP can aim to address several urban challenges, including the limited coverage of formal social protection programmes in urban areas, the weak rural-urban linkages that are impacting the efficiency of food systems, and the need for better data and measurement that is critical to strengthen national systems and capacities, including for enhancing accountability to affected populations.

⁵⁰ See for example savings groups organized at city and national level in countries where WFP operates: <https://sdinet.org/affiliates/>

→ Supporting governments in strengthening and expanding social protection programmes in urban areas

Building on WFP's Social Protection Strategy and its intersectional inequality lens, WFP can provide support to government partners on expanding or developing social protection programmes that reach vulnerable populations excluded from safety nets in urban areas such as informal workers, displaced populations, or people living in informal settlements. WFP's support and complementary actions can be provided in variety of forms and will depend on the existence or capacity of the national social protection system, including its architecture, programme features and knowledge and learning elements.⁵¹ Examples of technical support and services relevant to urban areas include guidance on designing adequate targeting and prioritisation particularly in low-income and informal settlements, setting up enhanced single registries, designing beneficiary accountability mechanisms, identifying and setting up appropriate delivery mechanisms and calculating transfer values that are fit for the urban context and promote people's ability to obtain an adequate quantity of healthy food.

WFP can also promote and support stronger linkages between social protection and the health, education and disaster risk management systems. This can be done through technical support including on policy, advocacy, and evidence generation.

Considering the increasing inequality and exclusion in urban environments, the rising young population, and the gender dimensions of vulnerability in urban areas, WFP can also support governments in ensuring that urban social protection programmes contribute to economic and gender empowerment among the most marginalised groups. This may include technical support for integrating financial inclusion components in programme design, as well as nutrition-sensitive and gender transformative approaches.

WFP can also promote and support **stronger linkages** between social protection and the health, education and disaster risk management systems. This can be done through technical support including on policy, advocacy, and evidence generation. For example, coordination and cooperation between **social development actors and national disaster management** authorities can create stronger coherence and complementarity between systems and contribute to effective shock responsive

programmes and urban preparedness efforts.

Stronger links are also needed with local government and urban development stakeholders, particularly to promote better integration of social safety nets with existing slum/neighbourhood upgrading programmes and other pro-poor spatial and development interventions implemented at the urban scale. This complementarity can simultaneously address multiple factors that impact food security and nutrition in urban areas, including addressing insufficient or unstable incomes of vulnerable groups living in slums and low-income settlements, while improving the unsanitary or hazardous conditions commonly found in their living environments.

→ Supporting governments in expanding and refining urban assessment, targeting methodologies, and processes to enhance accountability to affected populations

WFP can leverage its programming and data and analytics expertise to support governments in piloting, documenting and mainstreaming innovative approaches to data collection on vulnerable populations and the wider urban area. Concrete technical support can include establishing appropriate mechanisms and tools to engage local actors and communities in the targeting and prioritisation process, leveraging technology and digital communications to enhance data collection and communication with communities on targeting decisions, technical support on establishing and managing community feedback mechanisms, adjusting assessment methodologies including sampling and indicator selection to the urban context and/or provision of urban vulnerability assessments to inform decisions on vulnerability criteria and the selection of urban domains, among others.

→ Supporting governments in enhancing the efficiency of food systems and rural-urban linkages

WFP can support and provide services to governments to strengthen the food systems, rural-urban linkages⁵² and the functioning of value chains supplying urban areas, increasing their resilience to shocks and improving their efficiency in meeting the increasing demand for food in cities. This will include advocacy, policy and programme support at different levels, depending on the needs of the

WFP can invest in building partnerships with, and supporting small and secondary cities, as they play a key role in transforming food systems due to their proximity to surrounding rural areas, or their location within city-region systems, making them strategic entry-points for food systems interventions.

⁵¹ For more details on the building blocks of a national social protection system and modes of support, please refer to the WFP Social Protection Strategy (2021).

⁵² Understood as both physical and intangible linkages, ranging from road infrastructure, digital and financial services, and social and economic transactions and networks that can strengthen food systems and the functioning of value chains.

context and the national and local actors.

For example, WFP can leverage its expertise in supply and value chains, and data and analytics, to support governments in improving food systems performance, by providing timely market information, and identifying existing or potential market/supply chain delivery bottlenecks. In contexts where logistics, cold chains, transportation and storage facilities along the value chain supplying urban areas are deficient, WFP can also seek partnerships with government, private sector and IFIs, as well as FAO and UN-Habitat, to promote investments in infrastructure across the value chain, including in road networks, transportation and storage facilities that minimise value chain disruptions. Such interventions can help reduce post-harvest food losses, reduce the costs of healthy food in urban areas, improve food safety, help local government actors manage growth and natural resources and generate properly paid jobs across the value chain (in the production, storage, distribution and retailing sectors).

Establishing partnerships with urban development actors in these initiatives can promote better integration of food systems into **regional and local development plans**, which can also attract and generate longer-term investment.

Lastly, WFP can invest in building partnerships with and **supporting small and secondary cities**, as they play a key role in transforming food systems, due to their proximity to surrounding rural areas, or due to their strategic location within city-region systems, making them strategic entry-points for food systems interventions.

→ Supporting governments in embedding food security and nutrition outcomes in local development plans, programmes and interventions

Regional land use frameworks, infrastructure development plans, waste and water management and mixed-use schemes are often utilised by urban development actors to manage and develop the city. WFP can firstly raise awareness of the interconnections between these instruments and food security and nutrition outcomes. Secondly, WFP can partner to leverage these instruments to improve service infrastructure in areas where school-feeding and nutrition interventions are needed (for example to address food deserts);⁵³ to enhance access to jobs and boost local economies; or to minimise food waste along the value chain – all of which have an impact on food security and nutrition outcomes.

When feasible, WFP should strive to link its asset creation/rehabilitation, public works and school-feeding projects

with existing city-wide or neighbourhood-specific plans, particularly those aiming to improve conditions in low-income, hazard-prone or informal settlements. This will promote complementarity and sustainability of efforts and successful exit strategies. Lastly, urban food security and nutrition are often not recognised by local governments and ministries in charge of urban planning or are considered to be an ‘unfunded’ mandate. WFP is in the right position to advocate, build evidence and build the capacity of local governments, with an emphasis on transformative food systems and improving rural and urban linkages. WFP, along with key partners such as FAO and UN-Habitat, can highlight opportunities for local governments to use this for managing urban growth and address the land transition created by urbanisation, with clear links to climate change and environmental sustainability. WFP can also play an important role in mediating and facilitating better collaboration on food security and nutrition issues between city and federal/sub-national or national levels.



STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5. HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ACTORS ARE MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE

Urban crises in the last decade have demonstrated the challenges of operating in cities and some of the shortcomings of aid coordination and delivery in complex urban areas. Among the lessons learned are the need for a more holistic response and a stronger inter-sectoral (e.g., inter-cluster) coordination to address multi-sectoral issues and essential needs, and the need to prioritize local actors to foster ownership and better coordination.⁵⁴ Despite these challenges, cities offer opportunities that can be tapped to support humanitarian and development partners in being more effective in urban areas. These include the untapped potential to use urban data in crisis response, and the opportunities for greater use of technological innovation and digital solutions. WFP's response can include the following interventions:

→ Strengthening the cluster mechanism's focus on urban areas

WFP will continue to ensure that the Emergency Telecommunications, Logistics and Global Food Security clusters engage urban actors in areas where clusters are activated during crises and in relevant emergency preparedness activities. The inclusion of urban actors can help the clusters' efforts to alleviate constraints of delivering humanitarian assistance in urban areas.

⁵³ Food deserts can be described as geographic areas where residents have limited or no access to affordable, healthy food options. The concept takes into account the type and quality of food available, and the accessibility in the form of proximity to food stores and retailers.

⁵⁴ IASC, 2018.

Recognising the multi-sectoral nature of responses to such crises, the WFP-led clusters will encourage inter-cluster coordination on urban issues at the global and local levels. Prior to emergencies, the three clusters will include the urban context, preparation for urban crises, and improvement on emergency responses in/by cities in their training materials. WFP can likewise extend the delivery of its on-demand services and advisory solutions to support the urban-related initiatives of national governments and the UN development system's initiatives.

→ **Bolstering data and analytics capacity of the most at-risk cities**

WFP can support the most at-risk cities increasing their capacity and deploying/improving tools to collect, analyse and utilise robust and granular urban data on food security, nutrition and essential needs, and in collaboration with other relevant actors already operating in these urban areas. WFP can also support business processes, data governance, data management and technology to enable contributions to other partners via open source constructs. The main purpose is to enable cities to do a deep dive on urban food security and nutrition issues, determine new solutions and when these solutions mature, share the outputs and process with other cities within their respective countries to replicate good practices.

→ **Deploy innovative/digital solutions to address gaps in humanitarian response in urban areas**

WFP can assist the most at-risk cities, the ecosystem of urban actors and the affected populations in deploying digital solutions that are appropriate to their needs and specific local contexts. Satellite imagery, drone technology (e.g., for mapping urban slums/informal dwellings or neighbourhoods), machine learning and AI applications, for instance, can be used to improve local systems building on the existing capacity of the city and its actors.

→ **Ensure that WFP's engineering and infrastructure interventions contribute to urban development**

In collaboration with its partners, WFP's role in providing engineering interventions (e.g., construction, retrofitting or quick recovery of roads, bridges, schools and community infrastructure, warehouses, food production, and food distribution facilities) in cities and urban areas in need will aim to not only meet the urgent food and security needs, but also support the humanitarian community and partners by re-establishing physical access, and when possible, contribute to longer-term development of beneficiary cities in line with their respective local development plans.

→ **Ensuring the inclusion and shaping of the urban programming requirements in both UNSDCF and HRP**

WFP can play a strong role in incorporating, highlighting and shaping the urban programming requirements of the UN Sustainable Development Common Frameworks (UNSDCF) and the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP). Through its body of analytics, WFP can identify and highlight the most pressing urban FSN issues and their root causes and integrate these considerations into the respective Common Country Analysis (CCA) of countries where it operates. This, in turn, can enable the UN Country Team and its members to develop informed solutions and programmes in the UNSDCF to address the urban-related problems prevailing in the country.

Similarly, WFP will help infuse urban elements into the targeting process and needs/gaps analyses of Humanitarian Response Plans, and in co-developing the HRP's strategic priorities, response approaches, cluster/sector activities, response monitoring and other relevant elements of the HRP to capture and address both the urban and rural impacts of the humanitarian crises.

Through its body of analytics, WFP can play a strong role in incorporating, highlighting, and shaping the urban programming requirements of the UN Sustainable Development Common Frameworks (UNSDCF) and the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP).



WFP will likewise work with the UNCT/UNHCT to create appropriate sub-national coordination mechanisms in cities, when needed, to better engage local actors and improve local response capacities in dealing with the crises.

CONTRIBUTING TO GLOBAL ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS

→ Establish, strengthen and connect with multi-stakeholder global and regional partnerships

Through its international standing, extensive field presence, global reach and credibility, WFP can position itself strategically as a champion of urban food security and nutrition within the complex ecosystem of urban actors by establishing, strengthening and connecting with multi-stakeholder partnerships at global, regional, national and subnational levels. Partners include alliances and networks of cities, networks of non-governmental actors, UN agencies dealing with sustainable urbanisation such as UN Habitat, UNDP and others, UN Country Teams, city/local authorities and other urban actors. Urban multi-stakeholder partnerships can cover traditional WFP areas like social welfare, agriculture, crisis management/humanitarian and health sectors, or new collaborations in non-traditional sectors such as infrastructure, shelter, WASH and local governance which can directly or indirectly affect urban food security and nutrition.

To achieve this, WFP will intensify its engagement in relevant global forums and high-level debates, including under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the global Food Security Cluster, and the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, as well as under global networks of cities and local governments such as Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, C40, among others.

When needed, WFP can also convene or strengthen its participation in global and regional platforms, bringing together international actors with governmental regional organizations (e.g., African Union, ASEAN, SADC, PIF etc.) to raise awareness of urban food security and nutrition and promote multi-stakeholder collaboration and dialogue.

At the country level, WFP can also advocate for better policy coherence and cooperation at a higher coordinating level, to enable multi-sectoral action plans for urban areas and effective oversight and direction of programmatic interventions.

→ Influence policy debates

WFP's credibility and international standing also puts it in a good position to influence debates on binding and non-binding international, national and local policies relevant to urban food security and nutrition. Its active

participation in global and regional policy-making dialogues and processes can help integrate urban food security and nutrition challenges into relevant policies, including in areas such as rural-urban linkages, transformative food systems and nutrition.

National urban policy is a particularly strategic area where WFP can incorporate food security and nutrition measures that can cascade down to all urban governments within a country. This can be complemented by engaging in legislative processes on relevant urban development policies (e.g., infrastructure). At the local level, WFP should engage the most at-risk and strategic cities with the strategy of developing "model policies" on urban food security and nutrition that other cities and countries with similar contexts can replicate.

→ Commission research and facilitate exchanges to generate and communicate experience at all levels

Developing research and facilitating knowledge exchange platforms and events can help generate interest and bridge knowledge and awareness gaps on urban food security and nutrition issues. Such research and exchanges can be conducted at local to global levels and their findings can serve as a basis for policy discussions and the development of solutions. This strategy can also take advantage of WFP's Centres of Excellence, its participation in global platforms such as the World Urban Forum, its support to governments in South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as potential partnership with universities in larger cities on local knowledge generation, among others, to maximise WFP's presence in the global urban community.

→ Reach cities through advocacy

While it will not be possible to engage in all affected urban areas directly, WFP can reach cities and their ecosystem of actors through a strong advocacy strategy focussing on:

- Mainstreaming urban food security and nutrition in overall urban development, inclusive cities and related frameworks for urban areas.
- Encouraging local actors to implement/adapt WFP-supported national systems and initiatives within their cities.
- Enabling WFP to better implement its work in cities.

There are multiple advocacy areas as shown in the previous chapters, but this can also include the consideration of refugee, internally displaced and migrant groups in the food security and nutrition component of appropriate plans and programmes of host cities. More importantly, WFP can empower mayors, local authorities, planners, community leaders and citizens of "WFP Champion Cities" to inspire others by speaking to their counterparts on strategies, programmes and solutions that other cities can replicate.

2.5 Implementing WFP's cross-cutting priorities in urban areas

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Recognising that women and girls have different levels of access to opportunities and services in urban areas (see section 1.2, and 1.3 in Chapter I), WFP will support gender equality and women's empowerment in its work in urban areas, including through:

- Accounting for gender dimensions of urban vulnerability in our data and analytics, and using it for programme design at CO level, and strategy design at RB level.
 - Endeavouring to direct money into women's digital accounts on behalf of their families and advocating with national governments to also prioritize women as recipients of their social protection payments.
 - Enabling women to use existing accounts of their preference, or open new accounts to receive money from a variety of income sources: government social assistance, remittances, WFP, other humanitarian agencies, and their own livelihoods.
 - Ensuring that resilience and food systems programming, and market-based and supply chain interventions factor in gender-specific constraints and generate remunerative sources of income, skills, and networks for women, increasing both their social and economic capital.
- Carefully considering in programme design any unintended consequences of our programmes that may expose women to gender-based violence, as result of shifting income earning dynamics within households, the mobility patterns of women, or times for household and care duties such that they no longer fall within daylight hours.
 - When programming for the improvement or rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, WFP can ensure these physical improvements directly support in breaching gender gaps in the community, by improving safety for women in the neighbourhood, increasing the access to safe social spaces for recreation and interaction, or generating income for women to promote economic empowerment.

PROTECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS, CONFLICT-SENSITIVITY AND PSEA

The urban environment presents specific challenges related to protection, AAP, PSEA and conflict sensitivity that will inform WFP's programming in cities.



These may include:

- Compared to rural areas, there is a higher heterogeneity and density of population groups living side by side in urban settings, with social cohesion often being more fragile due to divisions that run along socio-economic, ethnic, political or religious lines.
- Low-income and informal settlements are often politicised by both formal and informal local authorities and 'gatekeepers', which can result in diversion, exclusion and informal taxation practices with consequences for the identification and protection of the most marginalised communities and individuals.
- Crime and violence are often higher in urban areas, as well as risks of stigma, social exclusion and discrimination based on gender, age, displacement, disability, HIV status, group affiliation (youth gangs), territorial and/or social control.
- High-risk negative coping strategies are common in slums and low-income areas, particularly affecting women and girls.
- Frequent evictions and homelessness are common challenges for people affected by poverty in urban areas and people living on daily wages and those reliant on the informal sector. These risks are often exacerbated in times of economic downturns and other shocks.

WFP needs to be aware of these issues and how they interact with the urban programmes and response provided, aiming to mitigate these risks as much as possible. WFP can support protection, accountability to affected populations and conflict-sensitivity in its work in urban areas by applying a **people-centred approach** to programme design and implementation, including by:

- Strengthening the use of context analysis in its urban interventions, to ensure an adequate understanding of national and local dynamics and key stakeholders at all levels, and to establish the right partnerships and communication channels.
- Utilising tools and soft skills for community engagement adapted to the urban context, building on WFP's protection and accountability policy, and WFP's guidance on Community Engagement for AAP. This will be done at all critical stages of the programme cycle, including assessment and in programme design and targeting, to mitigate the risks of raising community tensions during times of programmatic change such as re-targeting exercises and exit strategies.

- Investing in more piloting and exchange on Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) in urban contexts, including how to address challenges arising from scaling up and re-targeting exercises.
- Applying conflict sensitivity minimum standards through conflict and risks analysis, and risk monitoring across the programme cycle, to anticipate and mitigate any unintended consequences of our operations for conflict-affected populations and maximising the positive effects on peace and social cohesion, where possible.
- Building the capacity of local actors and service providers that may come into contact with affected populations on protection and AAP principles, and disability inclusion.

Lastly, WFP will build upon context analysis as well as other sources of information to assess and analyse risks related to PSEA to establish and put in place appropriate prevention, response and mitigation strategies.

Together with protection actors and other relevant stakeholders, WFP will work to capacitate and raise awareness on PSEA-related issues with both cooperating partners and non-traditional partners supporting its urban interventions



Through its extensive global, regional, national and local presence, WFP will do its part in achieving environmental sustainability in urban areas by improving, rehabilitating and protecting the environment, preventing pollution and reducing food waste, enhancing WASH facilities and practices, and promoting sustainable practices that contribute to food safety, food security and nutrition in cities.

WFP will further improve the sustainability and resource-efficiency of its own operation while advocating for environmentally sustainable operations among its partners and strengthening their respective capacities to plan and implement environmentally-sound activities that contribute to urban food security and nutrition during emergency, humanitarian and development interventions.

3.

Ensuring success



3.1 Fit for purpose: programme policy shifts to achieve the urban vision

WFP's capabilities and operational footprint in urban areas have significantly expanded over the past decade, and important efforts have been made to advance knowledge and practice in this area. To address WFP's vision and achieve its goals in urban areas, this strategy outlines a programme policy objective complemented by key shifts. These shifts equip WFP to meet the urban challenge and contribute more effectively based on its mandate and comparative advantage.

This means that our programmes will take stock of the factors impacting people's access to food, a nutritious diet and essential needs in urban areas, and explicitly use them in programme design and implementation. WFP can then respond to food insecurity and malnutrition in urban areas by addressing the vulnerabilities arising from **urban-specific factors**. Most of these programme shifts already have a strong foundation within the organization; nonetheless, they require additional investment to fast-track or further mainstream in programming and partnership building.

The programme policy objective of this strategy is:

To strengthen the focus on urbanisation in WFP's support and operations, by integrating urban perspectives in its programming in a multi-sectoral way, that is complementary to, and coherent with the actions of humanitarian, development, peace and local actors.



The following key shifts have been identified:



SHIFT 1: ENHANCING OUR PARTNERSHIPS FOR URBAN PROGRAMMING

This shift summarises who are the key players in urban areas, why it is important to partner with them, and initial actions towards accelerating this shift in programme policy.

What is different about partnering in urban areas?

• **Multiple actors and interests in urban areas:** In urban areas, there is a set of local actors that are part of the solution. From local governments to the private sector, from business owners to federations of urban poor, from academia to financial service providers - each with their own set of interests, values and norms. Navigating this operational environment requires knowledge of the power brokers, and the roles and responsibilities of both formal and informal actors. Many of these actors are also involved in providing services and/or unofficial support systems to the most vulnerable urban populations, and have likely played a role in responding to earlier/on-going crises. Establishing partnerships has important policy and programming implications, for example for **targeting processes**, for **humanitarian access**, for strengthening **local systems** and ensuring successful **exit strategies**, among others.

• **Multisectoral nature of the food security and nutrition challenges in urban areas:** For WFP to be effective in urban areas, it needs to combine its operational capacities and expertise with strong technical partners across several sectors. These multi-sectoral partnerships can cover engagements and complementary programming on traditional WFP areas like social assistance, agriculture, crisis management/humanitarian and health sectors or new collaborations in non-traditional sectors such as infrastructure, shelter, WASH and local governance which can directly or indirectly affect urban food security and nutrition. Stronger multisectoral partnerships are also important to reduce the funding gap, to lay the foundations to swiftly proceed to national programmes where possible, and to ensure the delivery of well-integrated packages.

• **The key role of local governments:** Local governments set the rules for the development of urban areas and their citizens' well-being, including cities' expansion and the provision of maintenance of basic infrastructure and services to improve housing and livelihood opportunities. Local governments often regulate quality, location and zoning of food and market services and infrastructure, including standards in maintenance and construction. They regulate local trade, advertising and taxation, street vending,

transport and mobility, and thus have a huge potential for impacting the affordability of healthy diets. They are not only an obvious ally for transforming food systems but are also crucial for the effectiveness and applicability of WFP's programmes, and successful exit strategies.

WFP can accelerate this internal shift by:

- **Embedding strong actor mapping and power analysis in programme design:** Finding entry points for engagement and forging the right partnerships in complex urban areas should be anchored in a good understanding of the ecosystem of urban actors. This should include strong actor mapping that also includes informal governance structures and informal actors, power analysis, and consideration of political interests, ethical and security risks in urban areas.
- **Developing comprehensive guidance for partnership building and coordination in urban areas:** WFP will work with a myriad of stakeholders and will need to coordinate programming across a range of sectors and partner institutions. This highlights the importance of having both comprehensive guidance and the necessary coordination and management systems for handling multiple partners. This guidance will support regional bureaus and country offices in identifying new partnerships for resource, knowledge, policy and governance, advocacy and capability, forging effective relationships, and conveying clear messages to new and prospective partners on WFP's vision and value proposition.
- **Seeking alignment and complementarity** with existing local government programmes, plans and projects (i.e., urban development, infrastructure, recovery and/or disaster risk management plans), to ensure that programmes are streamlined in local efforts and contribute to longer term outcomes. This will also pave the way for more successful exit strategies. Activities like basic infrastructure rehabilitation will require coordination with local government, and adherence to local building codes, plans and regulations.
- **Contributing to a UN system-wide approach to sustainable urbanisation:** Intervening in a coordinated and integrated way is at the core of the UN system-wide approach to sustainable urban development. WFP will accelerate this work by mapping out opportunities for stronger collaboration and complementarity with key UN agencies operating in urban areas to explore how joint endeavours could achieve collective outcomes at the national and city levels in various countries and contexts.

Table 3.1. Examples of key stakeholders to partner for programming in urban areas

 <p>LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER SUB-NATIONAL AUTHORITIES</p>	<p>WFP will aim to work more closely with local governments, including for defining vulnerability criteria, identifying the most at-risk locations in urban areas, or identifying entry points for strengthening food systems. This may also include co-developing food and nutrition sensitive plans and scenarios (i.e., contingency, and early warning). Nonetheless, while local governments play a strong role in cities, they are not the only governmental actor impacting urban areas and this could vary considerably from country to country. A complementary, multi-governance approach that engages with other relevant sub-national and national authorities will be needed in some contexts due to limitations on funding or capacity, or political or security constraints, among other challenges.</p>
 <p>UN AGENCIES</p>	<p>WFP will map out partnership opportunities with UN-Habitat by exploring how the work of each agency complements that of the other and how the two agencies might be able to achieve collective outcomes in various countries and contexts. UN agencies such as FAO, UNICEF, ILO, UNHCR, UNDP, among others, work on sectoral issues that relate to and complement efforts on urban food security and nutrition, offering extensive programme portfolios and experience. Examples of relevant areas of work include: food systems governance and city-regions' food systems (FAO), labour market analysis and decent employment (ILO), WASH interventions and social protection (UNICEF), urban safety nets for displaced populations (UNHCR), and joint assessments and analysis, particularly in support of the triple Nexus (all UN agencies), among others.</p>
 <p>PRIVATE SECTOR</p>	<p>The private sector has a substantial presence in most urban environments and is a critical player in shaping urbanisation through investments in infrastructure and industries that generate employment, as well as through the supply of mobile technology, financial services and commodities. Moreover, several of WFP's areas of work benefit from close collaboration with the private sector, including cash transfers, Food for Training (FFT) and food systems. Other potential areas of collaboration to strengthen or establish include: job placements and longer-term employment, food fortification and its commercialization, investments for strengthening rural-urban linkages, improvement of basic service delivery through facilitation of appropriate regulatory and procurement mechanisms, supply and integration of digital technologies in programming and data and analytics, among others.</p>
 <p>IFIS & DEVELOPMENT BANKS</p>	<p>Partnerships with development actors, IFIs and development banks such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank, among others, are key as they lead on the latest development thinking, promote innovation, and are key players to strengthen and complement policy support to governments in areas such as social protection, and inclusive economic recovery. Alignment with their investments, often at a large scale, can amplify the impact of interventions particularly in the food systems, social protection, value chain development and improvement of service provision.</p>
 <p>CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS</p>	<p>Strong participation by civil society and communities brings invaluable local expertise and knowledge, deepens participation and boosts inclusion and innovation. WFP should work actively with community-based organizations such as women's groups, informal workers' cooperatives and savings groups. They play an important role in service provision including informal safety nets, especially in areas with low service penetration, and can provide invaluable knowledge for programme design, targeting and prioritisation, and community sensitisation. In addition, umbrella organizations of the urban poor or informal workers, such as Slum Dwellers International (SDI), and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) have both a global reach and representations in dozens of countries where WFP operates. There is also a growing localisation of food policies and grassroots nature of urban programmes led by civil society, addressing issues related to food security, nutrition, and the food environment⁵⁵ which WFP can learn from and leverage.</p>

55 World Bank, FAO, 2018.



SHIFT 2: MAKING DATA AND MEASUREMENT FIT FOR URBAN CONTEXTS

WFP's strong expertise in designing and conducting food security analysis; market price monitoring; essential needs analysis and costs of nutritious diets analysis; among others, make it a partner of choice to fill data and knowledge gaps on urban food security and nutrition, which in turn can create more demand for such services and support resource mobilisation.

However, there are specific challenges on urban food security and nutrition data that require attention in programme policy. These challenges include:

- **The measurement of food security continues to be largely rural-centric:** Globally, the inadequacy in measuring food security and nutrition in urban areas has also influenced the lack of awareness of the true magnitude of the problem. Food security needs to be defined based on the characteristics of an urban setting.

Areas that require attention include: the social, economic and spatial determinants of food access in urban areas, food demand and preferences in urban settings based on the characteristics of the urban food environment, rural-urban linkages and their role in achieving nutrition outcomes, among others.

- **The importance of intra-urban and disaggregated data:** Awareness of the substantial variations on the food security and nutritional status of different segments of the population within an urban area is crucial for the timely and adequate allocation of resources and assistance. Disaggregation across wealth quintiles, and spatial disaggregation, particularly the intra-urban, require special attention. This makes it possible to uncover high disparities between locations within the same city and uncover the often overlooked physical and spatial factors that influence food security and nutrition in urban areas, such as the availability and condition of WASH and other basic infrastructure, the availability of food markets, among others..

- **Context analysis not fit for urban areas:** Context analyses, when designed with an urban lens, provide an important tool for viewing urban areas holistically, including by integrating key information across the social, economic, physical, spatial and political elements of the city. By stepping back and looking at how the different urban dimensions impact food security and nutrition, WFP can have a much broader view of what is happening in a complex urban food environment and use it to inform WFP's urban needs and vulnerability assessments, and pathways to ensure the inclusion of disadvantaged populations.

This shift presents the following areas of action for programme policy that can accelerate our work in adapting our data, measurement and analysis to urban environments:

- **Adapting our tools and integrating urban data into our existing corporate systems:** At the core of this shift, is building on our expertise, our tested tools and established systems to ensure a smooth integration of urban data into our programming, monitoring and reporting efforts. To do so, this shift first proposes a review of our existing food security tools to assess suitability for urban environments, and feasibility for successful adaptation/adjustment. This will optimise use of resources, ensure coherence with our existing corporate systems and promote a regular stream of urban data. Some examples of small changes that can improve suitability of our tools for urban areas include: incorporating urban areas and tagging in Cadre Harmonise/IPC analysis; tagging markets with urban/rural markings for price monitoring; advocating for all monitoring data to have urban/rural location questions; among others.

- **Using urban context analysis for integrated programming:** Understanding context is the first step for effective and integrated delivery of our services and support in urban areas. WFP will invest in further adapting and mainstreaming robust **urban assessment, context analysis and stakeholder mapping** in the data and analytics that inform WFP's programming design in urban areas.

- **Leveraging administrative data and local monitoring and surveillance systems:** Collecting data in urban areas is an expensive and complex endeavour, and official statistics are often not representative of urban complexities, particularly intra-urban inequalities. Fortunately, the ecosystem of urban actors and institutions present in urban areas provides an opportunity for local data mining, with a range of administrative data and monitoring systems that can



both inform our own programmes, but also provide entry points for technical support to governments, particularly on validation and analysis of their own data that can in turn inform national urban policies and programmes.

• **Leveraging the actors present in urban areas for data and analysis:** Urban assessments, including context and risk analysis, and intra-urban data collection, can become a substantial (costly and time-consuming) undertaking and require different types of data and analysis. It is therefore more efficient and cost-effective when done in partnership with other agencies operating in urban contexts, as well as in collaboration with local experts and research institutions. Joint analysis will be of particular importance to inform the implementation of the triple Nexus and promote a shared understanding of needs, risks and vulnerabilities amongst the various humanitarian, development and peace actors.

• **Leveraging digital solutions:** The higher level of connectivity and the presence of private sector in urban areas, lends itself to the integration of digital solutions in data collection and analysis for urban programming. WFP in cooperation with partners has already explored the potential of new techniques and technologies to advance urban assessments, including the use of Open and Big Data, Call Detail records, and near-real time tracking through phone surveys.⁵⁶ The lessons learned from these provide a key entry point to accelerate this shift, including the recognition that digital technology needs to be complemented with qualitative approaches that work with community members to better understand underlying risks and vulnerabilities.⁵⁷

• **Leveraging community-led approaches for data collection and analysis:** WFP can also leverage and work with communities and grassroots organizations to establish or strengthen community-level systems for urban data collection and analysis, particularly in informal settlements or other disadvantage areas not covered by official statistics and other administrative systems. WFP can also learn from and build on self-enumeration processes by the community-based organizations, such as the ones practiced by Slum-Dwellers International (SDI),⁵⁸ which has been proven as valid evidence on the conditions and processes that drive urban poverty in informal settlements.⁵⁹ With the integration of digital and Information and Computer technologies (ICTs), community-based data collection can also inform programming and targeting processes, and

generate awareness, local ownership and capacity of the communities, including through SBCC initiatives.



SHIFT 3: REACHING THE FURTHEST BEHIND THROUGH PEOPLE-CENTRED TARGETING

Several characteristics of urban areas can stand in the way of a successful targeting system. Accurate baseline vulnerability data may not be available in urban areas, particularly in secondary and smaller towns, and in informal settlements within larger cities. Vulnerable urban populations, especially those most marginalised such as people living in slums, displaced and migrant populations, are often invisible in data, not likely to be included in government registries, or covered by official statistics. At the same time, have and have-nots often live side-by-side, making it difficult to differentiate who is worst off among a generally poor urban population.

Socio-economic and political dynamics, such as the political alignment of community groups, and multiple and competing community leaderships are all more common in urban areas, which can elevate the risk of fraud and corruption, and raise tensions and protection issues. Access challenges due to the security situation, territorial control by criminal groups, or ongoing conflict can also be a strong obstacle when taking place in dense urban areas.

The following are the initial key actions, relevant to data, partnerships and engagement with communities and local complexities, needed to accelerate this shift, building on the work and the platform created by the WFP Targeting Initiative, and the lessons learned from the response to Covid-19:

• **Mainstreaming the mapping of and appropriate engagement with local structures:** Programmes in urban areas need to ensure that community groups and local leadership structures are mapped from the onset and their basic social dynamics are sufficiently understood in order to inform targeting design and risk management. This mapping needs to be followed by an appropriate engagement with a representative range of stakeholders, for which WFP will need to further enhance its tools to be sophisticated enough to deal with the risks and sensitivities.

⁵⁶ Other examples include slum detection algorithms, OpenStreetMap, Inasafe and Drainage Mapping (HOT), and gridded population sampling. Since 2020, WFP's HungersMapLive covers near-real time food security information collected through phone-surveys for 35 countries, including for urban areas in 5 countries. Web-surveys on food security have been applied in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and different urban areas of Nigeria (te Lintelo, et al. 2021).

⁵⁷ WFP, Gfsc, 2017, p.6

⁵⁸ SDI is present in 32 countries and has organized self-enumeration efforts in over 7,712 slums, across 200 cities in Africa, Asia and Latin-American. More information is available here: <https://sdinet.org>

⁵⁹ Mitlin, Patel, 2014; Satterthwaite, Mitlin, Patel; 2011.

• **Leveraging local organizations and referral systems to reach the furthest behind:** Beneficiary selection can be supported through referral systems put in place by organizations with permanent presence on the ground and that often provide services to the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in at-risk areas. Processes should be in place to map and build upon the existing local service infrastructure, such as local health centres, cooperatives (i.e. for informal workers or street vendors), slum-dweller organizations and savings groups, or facilities managed by NGOs, community-based, women-led or faith-based organizations.

• **Optimising resources and data by coordinating and partnering on urban targeting:** Coordinating with organizations with permanent presence on the ground (local government and NGOs) and with other agencies operating in the urban area, will be crucial to facilitate the identification of hotspots or the triangulation of knowledge on the communities and neighbourhoods. This may also require a convening and advocacy effort, such as establishing or joining platforms where knowledge exchange and data sharing can be managed. This will also help optimise the use of resources, by promoting complementarity rather than duplication, and limiting data collection to the minimum amount required.

• **Enhancing communication and sensitisation with communities through mixed approaches:** WFP can take advantage of the digital and communication technology available in urban areas to enhance community engagement and communication related to targeting decisions and community feedback mechanisms (CFM). Mobile technology, radio and internet are important channels to disseminate messages to vulnerable groups, and/or in urban areas where humanitarian access is limited and should be used to complement more traditional approaches such as information bulletins and community mobilisers. Using diverse channels and approaches tailored to specific groups will amplify the opportunities to reach the most marginalised populations and ensure their meaningful engagement in providing feedback and having their voice heard and incorporated into accountability mechanisms.



SHIFT 4: LEVERAGING THE RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES FOR FOOD SYSTEMS EFFICIENCY AND TRANSFORMATION

Strong rural-urban linkages support food system functioning. They are therefore pivotal for food security and nutrition in urban areas while also contributing to rural development. They can generate economic growth and employment opportunities across the value chain, improve availability and affordability of healthy food in urban areas, boost the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in both rural and peri-urban areas, and help reduce post-harvest losses. They can also support shorter supply chains, help optimise last-mile logistics, and minimise disruptions to strengthen local food systems which many urban areas rely upon particularly during crises.

When rural and urban linkages are weak on the other hand, **both rural and urban areas** suffer. Key issues include weak or broken value chains and long supply chains that disrupt the flow between production in rural areas and consumption in cities, including generating food waste and post-harvest losses. Rural-urban linkages can be strengthened in a variety of ways, and many actors have a role in doing so.

This shift offers the following initial areas of action:

• **Collating and/or generating operational research on food systems and rural-urban linkages,** Operational research is key to inform programme policy, mobilise stakeholders, and improve policy and capacity strengthening efforts. Examples include building knowledge on how markets and the food system across rural and urban areas affect affordability of healthy diets; and the role of the informal sector in shaping food systems in urban areas.

• **Strengthening collaboration with Rome-based agencies:** City-region approaches, developed by FAO and cities organised in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, aim to increase urban residents' access to sufficient, nutritious and safe food, while generating jobs and income opportunities for small-scale producers and businesses across the value chain. They do this through **policy responses** that are cross-sectoral, promote rural-urban linkages and facilitate inclusive participation of food systems actors.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ te Lintelo, 2021

- **Enhancing the linkages between urban programming and value chain actors** to support the strengthening of local livelihoods and creating business opportunities, including for smallholder farmers, retailers, distributors and local businesses. Lessons and impact from these efforts should be well documented and integrated into future programme design, advocacy and policy support.

- **Investing more efforts on small and secondary cities** (see box 3.1), as they play a key role in transforming food systems, due to their proximity to surrounding rural areas, or due to their strategic location within city-region systems, making them strategic entry-points for food systems interventions.

- **Developing our ability to engage and influence in territorial development discussions**, as these are key to strengthening rural-urban linkages and therefore have an impact on food systems. When combined with a policy environment that enhances rural-urban linkages, cities can become champions of sustainable food production and consumption systems. WFP will carve out its role in these efforts by engaging more proactively and using its expertise and mandate to champion inclusion of food security and nutrition outcomes on territorial development plans and dialogues.





SHIFT 5: INTEGRATING EFFORTS WITH URBAN PLANNING AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Achieving zero hunger in urban areas and increasing its contribution to inclusive and sustainable urban development requires a shift in how WFP relates and works with urban planning and territorial development processes. The following areas of action are proposed to support this shift. **WFP can accelerate this shift by:**

- **Boosting internal capacity and further defining WFP's value proposition for urban development processes:**

WFP needs to be more aware of how cities govern themselves and the existing regulatory, spatial and planning instruments that influence food systems, food security and nutrition. This will allow it to identify key entry points and articulate clearly where it can best complement urban planning and territorial development efforts to generate win-win effects for food security and nutrition outcomes and urban development more broadly.

- **Partnering with urban development actors:**

Operating in urban areas will be more effective and will have more chances to achieve scale and a longer-term impact if it is integrated into the urban development and planning efforts led by local governments or by development agencies, including by providing technical support on integrating food security and nutrition objectives in city-wide or neighbourhood plans, or

aligning our programming interventions with local development plans and policies.

- **Integrating and coordinating efforts as part of the UN system:** The UN system-wide strategy for sustainable urban development promotes the use of **territorial and integrated sectoral approaches** to address the spatial dimensions of poverty and marginalization in a city and across the rural-urban continuum. WFP can build on this and other instruments to build and leverage partnerships and coordination in its efforts in urban areas.

- **Increasing the focus on informal settlements:** As the clearest example of spatial inequality, slums or informal settlements are often where the drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition usually collide. Moreover, despite being the areas more in need of service provision and disaster risk management, informal settlements can often be excluded from normative plans to improve urban sustainability and reduce risk.

- **Increasing the focus on secondary cities and smaller towns:** Secondary cities with less than 1 million inhabitants account for 59 per cent of the world's urban population,⁶¹ accommodating the bulk of urban dwellers across all the regions where WFP operates. These cities also experience the highest rates of urbanisation, with urban sprawl also posing challenges related to affordable and adequate housing, in addition to limiting access to basic services. At the same time, secondary and smaller towns present both an operational and policy opportunity for several reasons (*Box 3.1*), which WFP can leverage to reach the most vulnerable urban populations and achieve its urban vision.

BOX 3.1 OPERATIONAL AND POLICY OPPORTUNITIES OF SECONDARY CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS FOR ACHIEVING ZERO HUNGER?

Secondary cities and small towns play an important role in the food system that **connects rural areas and the hinterland with the larger cities**. For example, they often host food processing, as they are closer to the raw materials, which can be leveraged for poverty reduction efforts and for strengthening value chains and rural-urban linkages.⁶² This can generate benefits for multiple areas of work for WFP, including food systems and nutrition.

Secondary cities and smaller towns tend to **contribute more to poverty reduction than larger cities**, due to the generation of non-agricultural employment opportunities for the poor and the lower cost of living.⁶³ They can also play a key role in **linking disconnected rural agricultural areas**⁶⁴ with essential products and services that will boost agriculture productivity (financial services, markets, etc.).

Despite the challenges they face, secondary cities and smaller towns are largely neglected in favour of capital and larger cities,⁶⁵ as their political importance as constituencies is still developing. They are therefore more in need of assistance and support due to their **limited institutional capacities and less access to technical and financial resources** compared to megacities and urban capitals. These cities would benefit from WFP's capacity strengthening efforts as well as support in promoting more linkages with national-level efforts. Operationally and logistically, they also offer a more **manageable scale with lower densities**.

61 UN DESA (2019).

62 World Bank, FAO, 2018, p.29.

63 Ibid.

64 Proctor and Berdegué, 2016.

65 UN-Habitat, 2022, p.116.

3.2 Enablers

The urban strategy will rely on several enabling factors to catalyse WFP's efforts to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition in urban areas.

PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Urban Community of Practice (CoP) will be instrumental in engaging WFP staff at all levels in achieving the outcomes of this urban strategy. The CoP is a central 'hub' forming a space to integrate the knowledge (programmatic guidance), expertise (people), and capabilities (skills) required to drive WFP interventions in urban settings. The community of practice will tie the WFP urban vision to a supportive network, such as through a peer network, a user-friendly knowledge management system, and a committee of external experts to feed into, guide and support WFP operations. It can play a strong role in facilitating knowledge exchanges and lessons sharing, tapping internal and external expertise, enhancing communication, and encouraging collaboration across relevant units and WFP personnel around the world who are working on urban food security and nutrition.

TECHNOLOGY

Cities are one of the most strategic areas for WFP to expand to as a trusted partner and provider of operational technology, solutions and advice, leveraging the plethora of digital solutions and providers often present in urban areas. WFP can explore new inter-operable digital solutions that

address urban food insecurity and malnutrition, meet the growing needs of the people we assist in urban areas, and inspire other cities to replicate the technology or adopt a similar technology-driven approach. Efforts to deploy digital solutions for strategic and at-risk cities will underscore the principles of do no harm, participation, non-discrimination and inclusion as well as the right to privacy.

INNOVATION

WFP can enable cities and urban actors to "sustainably foster local innovation ecosystems in areas where the need is greatest and where there is emerging innovation capacity" and to "build innovation capacity, internally and locally while mainstreaming innovative products into government systems". Due to their relatively better access to technology and infrastructure, urban areas are well placed to adapt, develop, deploy, pilot, implement and scale new technological and non-technological innovations by harnessing the ideas and skills of urban stakeholders in finding solutions to the challenges faced by their own communities in both emergency and non-emergency settings. Through the WFP Innovation Accelerator and the innovation hubs of regional bureaus and country offices, WFP can support, engage and strengthen the capacity of local actors to innovate including the private sector, academia, the media, local governments and other urban stakeholders in partnership with members of the humanitarian and development actors operating in urban areas.



Means of implementation

As described in **Chapter II, section 2.4**, this strategy recognises that 'urban' is not a separate programme area, but an operational context where WFP's strategic outcomes and different areas of work can be pursued. As such, the urban strategic framework presented here, aligned with WFP strategic plan, is offering a means to mainstream urban across the organization using its existing structures and systems, including its 2022-25 strategic plan, through its programme areas, and through regional workplans and country strategic plans. The Urban Strategy is accompanied by a **global roll-out plan**, available separately, that includes target indicators to monitor and evaluate the strategy, and to track and facilitate its corporate uptake. Broadly, the strategy will be implemented through the following vehicles:

REGIONAL PLANS

As urbanisation trends and challenges vary significantly across regions and sub-regions where WFP operates, regional plans will be highly strategic in determining context-specific goals, strategic approaches, institutional arrangements, and programmes for each of the six WFP Regional Bureaus. These plans also lay out the corresponding capacities and resources needed by the RBs to achieve their respective goals and address identified gaps. Strong advocacy and multi-level partnership approaches will also be essential components of these regional plans to enable RBs to work more effectively with the ecosystem of regional urban partners, operate in scale better, and support country offices in reaching more cities and urban populations in need of WFP's assistance.

COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLANS

The urban strategy will support WFP's country offices in taking a strategic approach to urban issues and position themselves in the most appropriate manner based on our mandate and capabilities, and the needs of the context. The framework developed in this strategy is aligned with, and feeds directly into, the five (5) priority areas of the WFP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, ensuring that urban interventions are adequately integrated into Country Strategic Plans and respond to the country offices' respective contexts and priorities.

KEY SHIFTS IN PROGRAMME POLICY

The key shifts described in Chapter III, section 3.1. offer five concrete areas in which to enhance our internal capabilities and strengthen our programmatic approaches to better respond to urban food security and nutrition challenges. Each key shift lists concrete steps that can be pursued through workstreams, or taskforces in collaboration with the Urban Community of Practice, to ensure the mainstreaming of new capabilities and programmatic approaches across the organization.



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Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CFM	Community Feedback Mechanism
CO	Country office
CoP	Community of Practice
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FFT	Food for Training
FNG	Fill the Nutrient Gap
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HLP	Housing, land and property
HQ	Headquarters
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally displaced persons
ICT	Information and communications technology
IFI	International financial institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
LMIC	Low- and middle-income country
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUA	New Urban Agenda
PSEA	Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse
RB	Regional bureau
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAMS	Smallholder Agriculture Market Support
SBC	Social and behavioural change
SBCC	Social and behaviour change communication
SDI	Slum/Shack Dwellers International
SO	Strategic outcome
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

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**PROGRAMMING IN URBAN AREAS,
EMERGENCIES AND TRANSITIONS UNIT (PRO-P)**

World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy - T +39 06 65131

wfp.org