

Regional Bureau for **Eastern Africa**

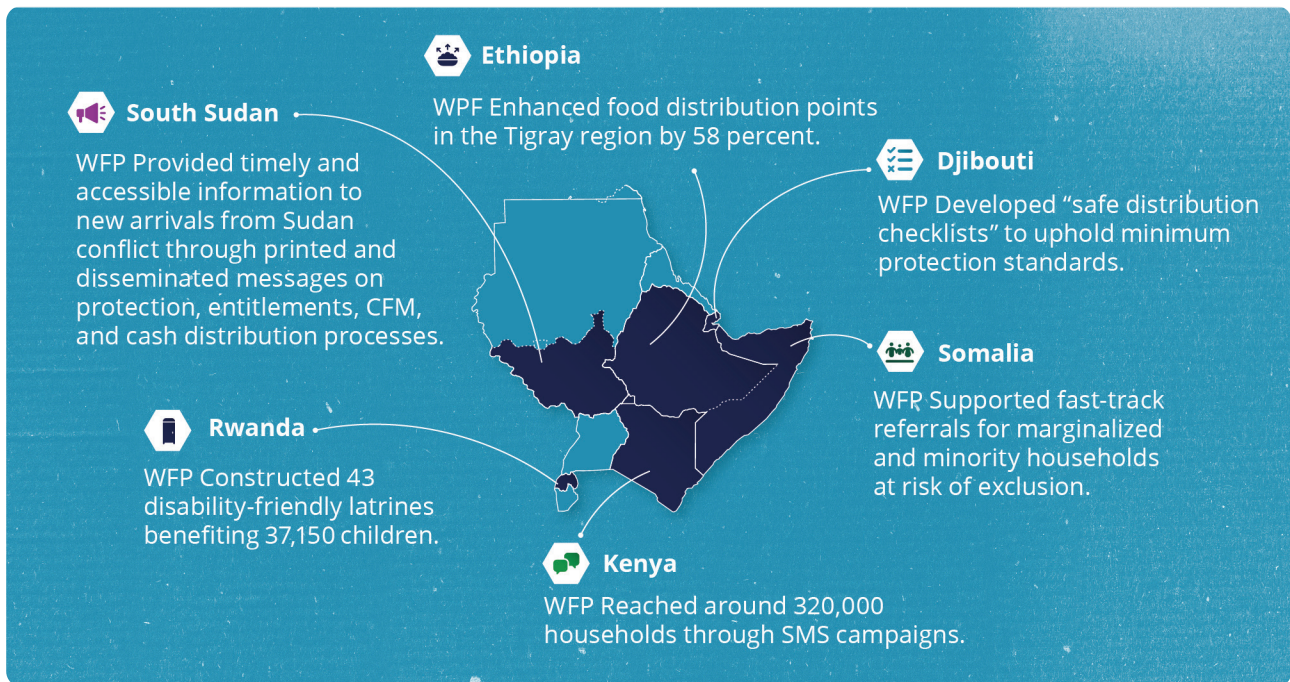


World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

PROTECTION and ACCOUNTABILITY to Affected Population





The protection landscape in the Eastern African region is complex and characterized by a multitude of risks from various factors including conflict, political instability, humanitarian crises, and natural disasters. In conflict-affected areas, civilians face grave threats to their safety including displacement, violence, and abuse of human rights. Additionally, the region is prone to recurrent droughts and food insecurity, exacerbating vulnerabilities and leading to negative coping mechanisms resulting in children being taken out of school, gender-based violence, loss of livelihood and more.

To mitigate these risks, WFP is embedding the centrality of protection and AAP into its operations. This was done through various components, such as incorporating risk protection assessments, ensuring community engagement and enhancing the capacity of cooperating partners (CPS) and staff in mainstreaming protection.

Protection for Affected Population

In 2023, in eight countries, WFP conducted various types of protection assessments, leading to the implementation of risk mitigation strategies. In addition, to further ensure we do no harm, “safe distribution checklists” were developed in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan, ensuring minimum protection standards are upheld.

To ensure Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), WFP facilitated a UN partner capacity assessment on PSEA for several cooperating partners in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Rwanda and Uganda. Different outreach campaigns with materials tailored for frontline workers, cooperating partners and staff was conducted to ensure humanitarians have critical knowledge on PSEA.

As part of ensuring no one is left behind, unhindered access is a principle the region operates by. In Somalia, WFP supported fast-track referrals of unassisted marginalized and minority households at risk of exclusion. In Rwanda, WFP constructed 43 disability-friendly latrines benefiting 37,150 children; while in Ethiopia, WFP is committed to strengthen the capacity of local organizations of persons with disabilities.

Empowerment and Accountability to The People We Serve.

In 2023, WFP had an increased focus on the importance of *empowerment and accountability to the people we serve*. As a result, all country offices in the region started **consultations for their community engagement action plans**, aiming to provide multiple pathways of engagement and to ensure that the people we serve remain at the center of our operations.

WFP uses a **wide range of diversified communication channels** to share crucial information on assistance, and create awareness of protection issues, and reporting mechanisms. For instance, In Kenya, short messages (SMS) campaigns reached around 320,000 households and in South Sudan, when new arrivals from the Sudan conflict reported challenges receiving important information, WFP and cooperating partners provided timely and accessible information by printing and disseminated 600 pictorial and textual messages on protection, entitlements, CFM and the cash distribution processes.

To enable affected individuals to assess the effectiveness of interventions and express concerns or provide feedback, **Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs)** have been established across all nine country offices. Across the region, a total of 134,309 feedback submissions were received and managed through various channels such as hotlines, suggestion boxes, helpdesks, and email addresses. Most of this feedback was addressed promptly, utilizing referral pathways when necessary.

In 2024, the region remains committed to reducing protection risks for the individuals we assist and adhering to protection principles, including those of do no harm and accountability. To facilitate this, finalization of country office community engagement action plans and the development of a regional protection strategy will be prioritized.



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