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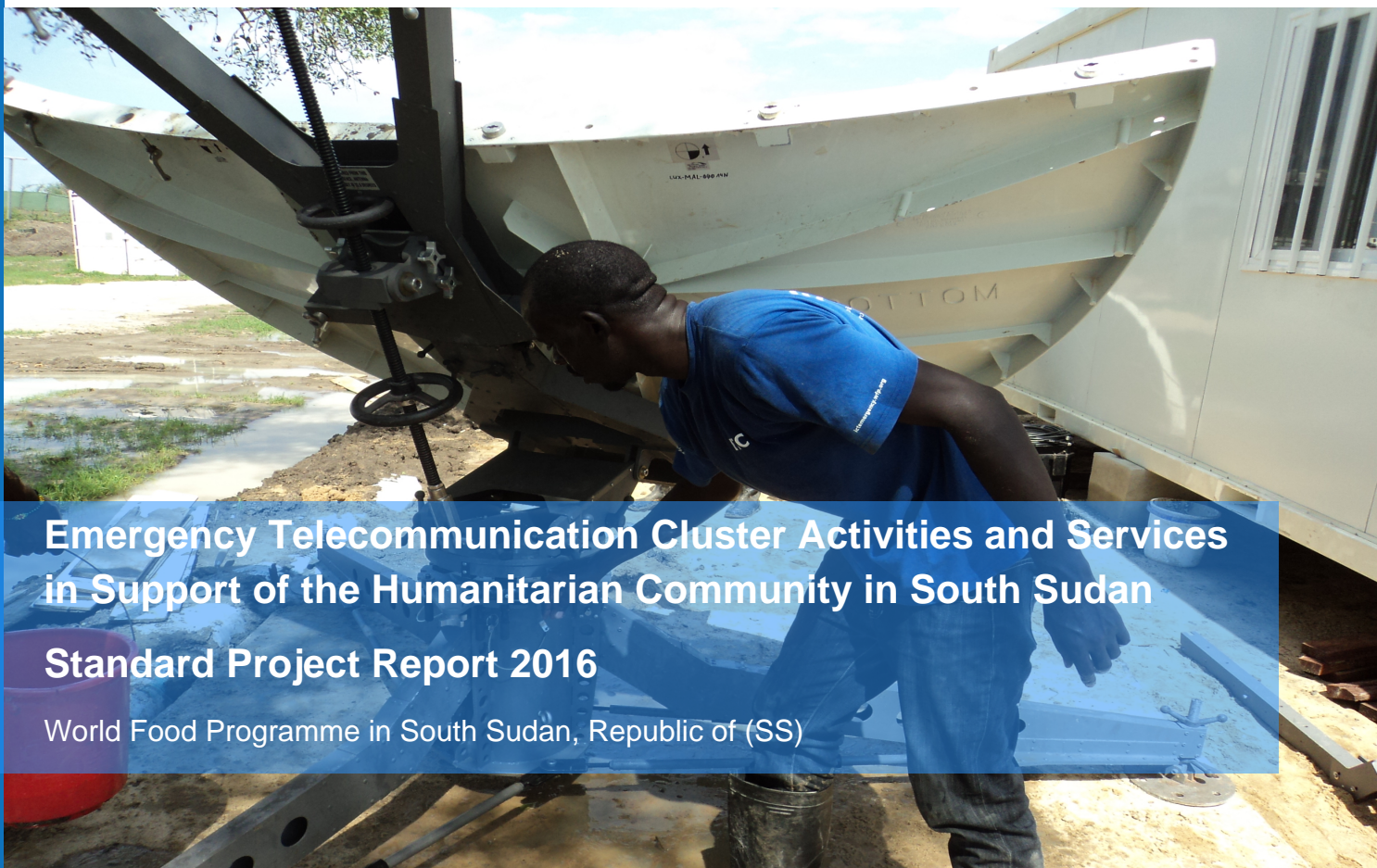
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**Emergency Telecommunication Cluster Activities and Services
in Support of the Humanitarian Community in South Sudan**
Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in South Sudan, Republic of (SS)



World Food Programme

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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

After more than five decades of near continuous war, South Sudan became an independent nation on 9 July 2011. In December 2013, a power struggle between the president, Salva Kiir, and his deputy, Riek Machar, broke into armed conflict that spread through the country, focusing primarily in the Greater Upper Nile region, where the majority of the country's oil reserves are located. In August 2015, an internationally mediated peace agreement was signed based on power-sharing, but it did not end the fighting. In April 2016, Machar, by then the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-iO), returned to Juba to form a Transitional Government of National Unity with Salva Kiir.

In July 2016, clashes between government and opposition forces in Juba killed hundreds and brought the Transitional Government to the brink of collapse as the leader of the opposition fled the capital. Conflict and insecurity spread to previously relatively stable parts of the country (the Greater Equatoria region and the Greater Bahr El Ghazal region), and large numbers of humanitarian staff were evacuated from South Sudan for several weeks.

Contributing to the complexity of the political landscape, in October 2015, president Kiir decreed an increase in the number of states from 10 to 28, with consequent shifts in power structures. The SPLM-iO proposed 21 states and named its own governors, leading to parallel structures. Debate continued on how centralised and local power, and the administrative structure of the country, will work.

The tragedy of renewed conflict takes place against a back-drop of very low physical, human and institutional development, South Sudan ranking 169 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index with some of the

poorest development indicators in the world [1]. Decades of conflict have caused severe destruction of basic infrastructure and long inhibited the provision of public services.

Since independence, an increasingly severe economic crisis has been driven by declining oil production, global declines in oil prices, the rapidly depreciating value of the South Sudanese pound, shortages of hard currency, and a significant dependence on imports. Before the conflict, oil revenues constituted around 60 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 98 percent of exports and 98 percent of the government budget [2]. Decrease in production and plummeting oil prices have contributed to a burgeoning budget deficit, rapid depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) and increased inflation. In October 2016, the inflation rate was the highest in the world at 836 percent [3; 4]. The parallel exchange rate for SSP fell to 76 South Sudanese Pounds (SSP)/USD in September 2016 compared to SSP 16/USD in September 2015 [5], and continued to weaken further. Conflict and insecurity across the country regularly cut off trade routes and impeded commercial imports.

Outside the oil sector, livelihoods are predominantly found in subsistence agriculture and pastoralism. Over 80 percent of the working population was engaged in non-wage work, the vast majority in agriculture [6].

The incidence of poverty rose from 45 to 66 percent between 2011 and 2015 [6]. The urban poor were increasingly desperate and destitute: in September 2016, 51 percent of households in Juba were food-insecure [7], more than double the 2015 level. Public salaries were not paid for months at a time in 2016, affecting families dependent on this source of income, and decimating the delivery of public services.

Together, conflict, insecurity and economic decline have left tens of thousands dead, pushed nearly 1.3 million people into neighbouring countries as refugees [8] and displaced a further 1.85 million people within the country as of December 2016 [9]. Of these internally displaced people (IDP), half were children and over 200,000 people were living in United Nations protection of civilian (POC) sites [10]. Civilians faced violations, including widespread sexual violence. The Greater Upper Nile region of the country suffered the highest rates of violence and displacement until 2016, when conflict spread to the Greater Equatoria region.

Despite large-scale displacement outside of South Sudan's borders, the country was also host to over 260,000 refugees [8], the majority of whom have been in the country for many years. Most refugees were from Sudan and resided in the large northern camps of Maban, Yida and Ajong Thok. In addition, smaller refugee populations mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia resided in the southern parts of the country. However, many refugees residing in southern camps fled the area, some returning to their home countries when conflict and insecurity spread to the Greater Equatoria region.

The food security and nutrition situation in South Sudan has deteriorated progressively since the conflict started in 2013, exacerbated by regular flooding, isolation in large swaths of the country during rainy season due to a lack of an all-weather road network, and high dependence on food imports. Traditional livelihood patterns have been disrupted and hunger and malnutrition rose to historic levels in 2016.

An estimated 4.8 million people were severely food insecure in the May - July lean season. Even after harvest in October to December 2016, the severely food insecure still numbered an estimated 3.6 million - an increase of one million people compared to the same period in 2015. Among these, an estimated 600,000 people were in towns and cities, where WFP has not traditionally worked in South Sudan [4].

The Greater Upper Nile region has experienced chronic food deficits due to conflict and insecurity. The July 2016 conflict, subsequent heightened tensions, economic collapse and renewed clashes across the country further aggravated already overwhelming needs. In 2016, the Northern Bahr el Ghazal region experienced a major food security and nutrition crisis driven by spiraling food prices and food shortages in markets, and the depletion of livelihood assets, which undermined traditional social safety nets. In the Greater Equatoria region, normally the primary food basket for the country, drought and insecurity in 2016 significantly disrupted food supply routes, and led to loss of an estimated 50 percent of all harvests and to massive outflows of people seeking shelter in Uganda, DRC and Kenya. [4]

Since the start of the conflict in 2013, with slight seasonal variations, the global acute malnutrition (GAM) level has remained above the emergency threshold of >15 percent in the Greater Bahr El Ghazal and Greater Upper Nile regions, even reaching up to 30 percent in Northern Bahr el Ghazal in 2016. Further, a worsening trend was observed in the Greater Equatoria region expanding the scale of the nutrition crisis to all the regions of the country. [4]

Susceptibility to disease has risen, with high numbers of cases of malaria, cholera, kala-azar and measles. The conflict has also exacerbated the situation of people living with HIV. In 2016, there were an estimated 179,000 people, or 3 in every 100 adults, living with HIV in South Sudan, approximately 10 percent of whom were on treatment. Women accounted for more than half of the people living with HIV in South Sudan and have faced increasing exposure due to economic decline and conflict. HIV prevalence was highest in the Greater Equatoria region, and prior to the July clashes, the Greater Equatoria region hosted about 90 per cent of patients on

treatment. However, the conflict cut off access to health facilities to thousands of people living with HIV who would normally receive antiretroviral therapy and HIV care services. [11]

Educational indicators are also among the lowest in the world, suffering from the lack of schools, qualified teachers, delayed teacher salary payments and materials and exacerbated by conflict and displacement. The pre-crisis primary education enrolment rate was 47 percent and completion rate 10 percent [12]; by 2015 enrolment had dropped to 35 percent nationally, although the situation had improved in more stable areas [13]. In the conflict-affected Greater Upper Nile, only 30 percent of schools were functional in 2015 [13]. The geographic expansion of conflict and insecurity in 2016 caused further deterioration in access to education.

Societal and cultural norms along with the decades of violence drive gender inequalities and discrimination in South Sudan. Men are generally accorded most productive assets, powers, privileges and authority and may have as many wives as they wish; domestic violence levels are extremely high. Young girls are given out in marriage for a bride price of cattle and divorce requires return of the bride price, with children generally going to the father's family. The maternal mortality rate is the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, over 80 percent of women are illiterate, and girls' access to education is significantly lower than boys' [1; 12]. There are significant gender differences in how violence, displacement and food insecurity affects women, girls, men and boys. Gender-based violence is common and forced recruitment of boys by military forces is wide-spread throughout the country.

[1] Estimated population in 2014 12.3 million (UNDP 2016); More than 60 ethno-linguistic groups (the largest being Dinka, 36 percent, and Nuer, 16 percent) (CIA 2016); Per capita income USD 1085 (UNDP 2016); Population age structure 65.42 percent under 25 years (CIA 2016); Military expenditure 10.32 percent of 2012 GDP; health expenditure 2.2 percent of 2013 GDP (CIA 2016); ; Population below national poverty line 50.6 percent (UNDP 2015); Mean years of schooling 5.4 years (UNDP 2015); Life expectancy at birth 55.7 years (UNDP 2015); Infant Mortality Rate in 2013 64.1 per 1000 live births (UNDP 2015); 84 percent of women are illiterate (UNDP 2016); 1 in 7 women die in childbirth (UNDP 2016).

[2] South Sudan: Impact of the Crisis and Role of Social Safety Nets (World Bank 2015).

[3] Consumer Price Index for South Sudan October 2016 (South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics 2016).

[4] WFP South Sudan Food and Nutrition Security Update (WFP 2016).

[5] South Sudan Market Price Monitoring Bulletin September 2016 (WFP 2016).

[6] South Sudan Overview (World Bank 2016).

[7] Juba Urban Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (WFP 2016).

[8] UNHCR 2016.

[9] OCHA 2016.

[10] UNMISS 2016.

[11] South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 19 (OCHA 2016).

[12] Girls' enrolment rate was only 35 percent. (Back to Learning in South Sudan, UNICEF 2014).

[13] Situation Assessment of Children and Women in South Sudan (UNICEF 2015).

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

The fluid political and security environment in South Sudan is challenging for strategic coordination and long-term planning, but WFP continued to work with government partners where possible, to build on its sustained, broad engagement in the country to meet humanitarian needs and maintain or create space for recovery- and resilience-oriented activities. WFP supported the efforts of the national and international humanitarian and development communities in aligning policies, programmes and activities for a more coherent, efficient and effective response.

Following independence, the Government of South Sudan adopted a "Vision 2040" to harness its resources and efforts to transform South Sudan into a modern nation. In the medium term, the Vision was pursued through the South Sudan Development Plan (2011-2016), which focused on four core building blocks: 1) improving governance, 2) achieving rapid rural transformation to improve livelihoods and expand employment opportunities, 3) improving and expanding education and health services, and 4) deepening peace building and improving security. However, a lack of political and economic stability has severely constrained the resources and capacities that the Government has available to pursue the plan.

In terms of humanitarian priorities, both the Government – through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHADM) and its implementing agency, the South Sudan Relief and Recovery Commission (SSRRC) – and opposition – through the Relief Organization of South Sudan (ROSS) have developed strategies. Generally, these strategies focus on developing a national framework for returns, resettlement, and reintegration. It is however widely recognised that security and the stabilisation of the country are pre-requisites for these strategies to be realised, and that overall capacity to implement these strategies is limited.

Despite the challenging context, WFP engaged in capacity strengthening efforts with national institutions as well as state-level ministries and local authorities, striving to adapt its activities to the shifts in administrative arrangements that occurred in 2016. However, the relatively limited capacity of national authorities to implement their development and humanitarian plans increased the significance of active strategic coordination among United Nations agencies and other humanitarian and development partners.

A national process for SDG localization did not start in South Sudan in 2016, and the volatility of the situation was not conducive to the preparation of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework to replace the UNDAF which ended in 2016. As a result, the United Nations Country Team launched an Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) as its overarching Strategic Plan covering the period 2016 and 2017. WFP co-led the ICF outcome group for enhancing resilience of communities with FAO and the outcome group for re-invigorating of the local economy with UNDP, and actively participated in the other outcome groups. The ICF contributed to a focused approach in recovery and development activities carried out by the United Nations community, and provided a framework for adjusting activities based on the evolving context. It also provided the opportunity for the development community to together leverage WFP's significant operational footprint to build joint programmes that deliver better results for the people we serve.

The strategic coordination of humanitarian efforts took place within the framework of the Humanitarian Country Team's (HCT) Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee cluster system. WFP was an active member of the HCT, led the logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters and co-led the food security and livelihoods cluster with FAO and the nutrition cluster with UNICEF. In addition, WFP participated in the work of other clusters, such as education, health, and protection.

Emergency Preparedness and Response:

In terms of its humanitarian engagement at the national level, WFP has had a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MHADM and SSRRC since 2012, renewed on a yearly basis. WFP has supported capacity strengthening in early warning systems and disaster risk management to enable the government to gradually increase its role in preparing and responding to humanitarian needs in the country, and has seconded two staff to the SSRRC. These efforts also involved cooperation with UNDP, FAO and UNICEF, providing technical and financial support and joint training. In 2016, this partnership resulted in the establishment of a National Forum on Early Warning Systems, which brings together technical government departments and humanitarian and development partners, and in the completion of a National Disaster Management Policy with key components on early warning systems and preparedness mechanisms. The participation of MHADM and SSRRC in inter-agency processes and assessments increased, and the SSRRC started producing an early warning bulletin.

WFP also had a MoU with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) for collaboration on the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS) surveys. The NBS was closely involved in the FSNMS surveys and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) processes in 2016, together with FAO, WFP and other partners, enhancing government ownership of the findings.

A Letter of Understanding between WFP, FAO and the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNet) on food and nutrition security information systems capacity development was signed in March 2016. An operational strategy was developed between the partners during the year aiming to support South Sudan's Food Security Council to enhance its food security and nutrition information collection, analysis and reporting, and strengthen the country's early warning systems, analysis and capacities.

Refugees:

In refugee settings, WFP worked closely with NGO partners to provide the needed food assistance, in coordination with UNHCR. Nutrition assistance in this setting was provided through tripartite agreements as per the WFP/UNHCR Global Memorandum of Understanding. A joint assessment mission (JAM) on refugee food security and nutrition which commenced in 2015 in partnership with UNHCR and FAO was finalised in 2016, and the partners were articulating a joint plan of action to take forward its recommendations at the end of the reporting period.

Nutrition and HIV/AIDS:

WFP collaborated closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH), at both national and state levels, to manage nutrition gap analyses and to deliver appropriate programming. In 2016, WFP and the MoH signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the main objective of enhancing the capacities of the Department of Nutrition both at the national and state levels to plan and manage effective nutrition programmes and responses. The collaboration resulted in development of the community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) guidelines, the recruitment of an international staff to support the Government's Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative, and the secondment of two staff to the Department of Nutrition.

WFP's strategic partnership with UNICEF continued to build on previous years' successes to scale up and improve the quality of nutrition programme delivery in South Sudan through the Joint UNICEF/WFP Nutrition Response Plan. Strategic coordination between the agencies enhanced the continuum of care between moderate and severe acute malnutrition treatment programmes, in particular through the closer alignment of cooperating partners that were engaged.

Together with UNAIDS, WFP continued to work with the MoH towards a national HIV policy fully incorporating institutional feeding activities. A joint study on food security and stigma of people living with HIV funded by WFP and UNAIDS had been carried out in 2015, and on this basis, WFP developed an updated HIV strategy for its activities in South Sudan in 2016. A workshop bringing together government, United Nations and NGO partners was organised in December 2016 to discuss partnerships and collaboration to implement WFP's strategy.

Safety-nets and resilience:

The participatory and multi-sectoral nature of food assistance-for-assets (FFA), Purchase for Progress (P4P) and school feeding activities provided significant opportunities for coordination and partnership.

At the national level, WFP continued to collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. At the sub-national level, FFA project coordination had previously been carried out through state-level steering committees and technical committees, which brought together staff from state Ministries of Agriculture, NGO partners, FAO and WFP. In 2016, WFP had planned to further enhance coordination and promote partnership between FFA and other food security related projects by replacing the steering and technical committees through the formation of Resilience Platforms in the seven states covered by WFP's PRRO. The creation of 28 states instead of the former 10 however hindered the implementation of this approach. WFP therefore continued to collaborate with the authorities and leaders that were involved in the former state-level committees, while approaching state authorities in the newly created states to identify possible structures that could achieve the objectives of the resilience platforms. In the interim, county- and community-level project management committees' involvement in FFA and resilience-building coordination increased as well to ensure continued, broad-based engagement.

FAO was WFP's key United Nations partner in resilience-building activities, leveraging complementarities between the two agencies' mandates and expertise. The strategic partnership culminated in a joint programme in Northern Bahr El Ghazal, funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development, providing a comprehensive package of activities through cash transfers, asset building, seed and tool provision, skills development and management of natural resources and related community relations. Under the joint programme, FAO and WFP held regular workshops, trainings and monthly partner meetings to improve the project management capacity of partners, to share good practices and lessons, and to address project-related issues.

As part of its P4P activities, WFP collaborated with the National Bureau of Standards, particularly to enhance institutional capacity for accredited aflatoxin testing services, which are crucial to ensuring the quality and safety of agricultural products entering markets. Despite the insecurity and conflict-related disruptions in the Greater Equatoria, WFP was able to work together with the Ministries of Agriculture in Western and Eastern Equatoria on training and workshops involving small farmers, extension workers, cooperatives and P4P partners. WFP partnered with UN Women to integrate gender training and women's economic empowerment into P4P activities.

For school meals activities, WFP continued to work with the national Ministry of General Education and Instruction with a view to supporting the government's commitment to improved access to education and growing ownership of school meals provision in the future. Capacity strengthening activities focused on practical issues of programme implementation through joint field trips. These field trips provided the opportunity for Ministry staff to tour schools, meeting local education authorities and WFP partners. The technical capacity of the Ministry's school feeding department was enhanced through greater awareness of facility and information management requirements for school meals implementation, and the sharing of concrete examples of implementation challenges and solutions first-hand. Joint field visits were also found to strengthen the overall collaborative relationship between WFP's school meals unit and the Ministry with an improved understanding of shared objectives, and will be continued in the future.

To improve the effectiveness of school meals provision in supporting primary school enrolment, retention and completion as well as educational outcomes, WFP continued its partnership with UNICEF under a Memorandum of

Agreement signed in 2015. The partnership aimed to build synergies between the existing educational initiatives from the two agencies, highlighting the particular needs of vulnerable groups and rural and remote areas, and to actively seek opportunities for joint capacity strengthening activities at national and state levels as well as joint policy development initiatives. The two agencies will enhance efforts to carry out joint programming in 2017, including joint emergency school feeding, with WFP providing food and deworming support and UNICEF and other education partners supporting learning spaces and materials; teacher training; water, sanitation and hygiene; and health and nutrition messaging.

Innovations:

The rollout of WFP's beneficiary and transfer management platform, SCOPE, provided opportunities for strategic partnerships for enhanced efficiency. In refugee settings, WFP and UNHCR signed a MoU on data sharing in South Sudan, enabling WFP to use registration data from UNHCR's database for beneficiary verification in SCOPE. WFP also forged a relationship with IOM around data sharing between IOM's Biometric Registration and Verification (BRAVE) database and SCOPE. Both organisations have a considerable footprint among displaced populations in South Sudan, and IOM has carried out large-scale biometric registrations. By sharing data, WFP could significantly speed up the rollout of SCOPE at a lower cost and reduce the burden of repeated registration on beneficiaries.

WFP also supported coordinated cash-based programming (CBP) in South Sudan by leading the country-level working group of the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and strengthening partner CBP capacities.

Clusters and common services:

The cluster system was pivotal to the coordination of the broader humanitarian response in South Sudan. WFP continued its broad engagement with the clusters, working closely with OCHA which chaired the Inter-Cluster Working Group and managed the HRP process. OCHA was a key partner in its leadership role in strategic engagement on humanitarian access, while WFP's operational footprint also required strong in-house capacity for access negotiations for convoys and rapid response missions and supported the logistics cluster and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS).

Cluster leadership and the provision of common services also offered opportunities for capacity strengthening activities with national and local authorities. For example, the emergency telecommunications cluster trained technical staff from the Ministry of Telecommunications and provided renewable energy solutions to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management for their emergency communication equipment. UNHAS trained civil aviation authority personnel for better airport management and provided security equipment, such as metal detectors, to enable airport security staff to carry out their duties more effectively and enhance the overall security of air operations in South Sudan. UNHAS also supported and facilitated an air traffic management project on behalf of WFP and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aiming to improve the overall safety of South Sudan's airspace through improved capacity and infrastructure.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

In 2016, WFP implemented its humanitarian and recovery assistance through an emergency operation (EMOP), a protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO), and five special operations. WFP's food assistance programmes in South Sudan continued to follow a dual-track approach along geographic lines during most of the year, with the EMOP active in the Greater Upper Nile as the main arena for South Sudan's conflict, and the PRRO operating in the rest of the country.

The year had begun in a hopeful situation after the signing of a compromise peace agreement between the Government and opposition, with an expectation of expanding scope for transitional and resilience-building activities. However, the context shifted radically during the course of 2016, as insecurity and conflict spread to formerly more stable areas and food security continued to worsen. The geographic distinction between emergency and recovery activities became more blurred, and operational focus centred around an adaptable emergency response coupled with maintaining and opening up space for recovery-oriented activities and capacity strengthening where possible. The worsening humanitarian situation also resulted in an expansion in the scale of WFP's special operations directly involved in supporting assistance delivery.

EMOP 200859 (2015-2017), approved budget USD 1,286,032,058 (2015-2017), aimed to provide life-saving assistance to people displaced and affected by conflict through food assistance distributions, prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, institutional feeding for the chronically ill, and support the re-entry into education for children in conflict-affected areas.

PRRO 200572 (2017-2017), approved budget USD 958,543,590 (2014-2017), aimed to assist vulnerable groups including refugees, displaced people and households affected by shocks through unconditional food and cash-based assistance, prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, and institutional feeding for the chronically ill; support the restoration of livelihoods and build community and household resilience; promote improved access to education, particularly for girls; and support small-holder farmers in improving their production and accessing markets

Special operation 200775 (2015-2016), approved budget USD 1,953,768 (2015-2016), supported the food security and livelihoods cluster in South Sudan, co-led by WFP and FAO. The cluster was dedicated to coordinating the food security sector nationally, and increasingly at state level, to ensure the most efficient response to food availability and access issues.

Special operation 200778 (2015-2017), approved budget USD 87,979,312 (2015-2017), enabled the logistics cluster to support the humanitarian community in South Sudan through the provision of logistical expertise, coordination and transportation of humanitarian cargo.

Special operation 200931 (2016), approved budget USD 663,080 (2016), supported WFP's coordination of the emergency telecommunications cluster in South Sudan, providing telecommunication services where basic infrastructure is limited while transitioning humanitarian data connectivity to a sustainable, cost-shared platform.

Special operation 200786 (2015-2016), approved budget USD 117,920,606 (2015-2016), enabled WFP to operate the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) on behalf of the humanitarian community in South Sudan, providing safe and reliable air transport to tens of thousands of humanitarian personnel.

Special operation 200379 (2011-2018), approved budget USD 167,352,881 (2011-2018), continued the construction and maintenance of feeder roads to supplement South Sudan's limited transport infrastructure. It aimed to link farmers and communities to markets and basic services, and reduce transportation costs and improve delivery efficiency for humanitarian partners.

In addition, a three-month emergency operation (IR-EMOP 201013) was approved in response to the July crisis in Juba, funded through WFP's global Immediate Response Account. The funding was used to procure 50 mt high-energy biscuits (HEB) to support first response activities to displaced populations. However, the HEB did not arrive in country before the three-month project ended. WFP used its existing HEB stocks to respond to new displacements in Juba. Part of the HEB purchased under the IR-EMOP were provided as a commodity loan to WFP's operation in Uganda, scaling up to assist over 400,000 new South Sudanese refugees, while the rest will support WFP's ongoing emergency operation in South Sudan.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

In 2016, WFP's operations in South Sudan were relatively well funded, with an overall funding level of 70 percent for the portfolio, excluding carry-over resources. EMOP activities attracted the highest level of support both in absolute and relative terms, while the PRRO was more constrained by its resourcing situation. Special operations funding levels varied, with the Emergency Telecommunication (ETC) and logistics cluster operations enjoying particularly robust funding levels.

The vast majority of resources received were provided as directed multilateral contributions, perhaps reflecting the large scale of operational needs in South Sudan in comparison to the overall level of multilateral funds available to WFP. However, donors often provided their directed multilateral contributions in consultation with the country office to ensure that priority activities were supported.

Overall, WFP's projects in South Sudan enjoyed support from a broad donor base, although a significant majority of funding in 2016 was provided by traditional donors. The largest donors of directed multilateral resources to WFP's portfolio in South Sudan were the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the European Commission, Germany and Canada. The country office will continue to engage with non-traditional donors to further expand the donor base.

Most of the resources received for South Sudan were directed to the project level rather than individual activities, providing WFP the flexibility to prioritise resources for activities within the project based on programme needs, also enabling timely responses to emerging needs such as the food and nutrition crisis in Northern Bahr El Ghazal. The country office also used the corporate advance financing facility to minimise funding gaps between the time of approval of contributions in donor agencies and confirmation in WFP's financial system. Advance financing enabled the country office to procure and distribute food items when they were most needed, and reduced gaps in food supply.

WFP South Sudan had multi-year agreements with three donors (Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom) in 2016 for activities under the EMOP and PRRO. Although fairly limited as a proportion of WFP's overall funding, multi-year resources improved the predictability of WFP's resource base, particularly important for food assistance-for-assets activities which require more extensive planning and preparatory work and longer-term engagement with beneficiary communities. Multi-year resources enabled early procurement and delivery of food and facilitated effective programming and prioritization of resources. They also improved cost-efficiency through savings from procurement, transport and contracting of partners.

A key resourcing requirement for WFP is the pre-positioning exercise, which relies largely on donor contributions received in the second half of the previous year. In 2016, WFP received a relatively robust level of resources for pre-positioning, enabling 85 percent of the plan to be completed. WFP will continue advocating for an expansion of multi-year funding and early donor contributions to support the pre-positioning exercise.

The relatively healthy resourcing situation reflected a strong and open partnership between WFP and the donor community. Proactive and regular engagement at the local level, with transparent communication about operational needs, challenges and achievements created a shared understanding of priorities and enabled the donor community to provide advocacy support that helped to ensure that urgent funding requirements could be met. The shared understanding also enabled the continued broad donor support to WFP's activities through the instability directly affecting WFP's presence in Juba.

The country office organised a number of field missions to enable donors to see the situation and WFP's response first-hand. Transparency and trust also improved the flexibility of resource prioritisation between projects, where donor contributions were often directed in consultation with the country office, and clearly explained reallocation requests from WFP were met with donor approval. Most donors who were requested to allow the use of their contributions as collateral for advance financing to increase the effectiveness of WFP's supply chain also responded positively. The country office worked closely with WFP headquarters, liaison offices and the regional bureau in Nairobi to ensure South Sudan's humanitarian situation was communicated to donor capitals and regional representatives. The country office also strived to provide visibility to the donors supporting its operations through press releases, web stories, pictures, videos and social media materials.

The scale of resources required to run WFP's operations in South Sudan was considerable, and WFP recognised the importance of pursuing economies and efficiencies, providing value for money to its donors while delivering a relevant, robust response to the beneficiaries we serve and the humanitarian agencies our common service provision supports. Improvements were seen in the cost-efficiency of WFP's logistics arrangements (such as the

shift from airlifting to airdropping nutrition commodities), consolidation and coordination of partnership agreements (in particular through better alignment with UNICEF), non-food procurement processes (such as increased fuel storage at sub-offices and an agreement with UNMISS on fuel supply in the absence of commercial providers), and an actual budget reduction for the logistics cluster as a result of the use of a new air asset which yielded significant cost-savings.

WFP's human resources continued to be a crucial component of the organisation's ability to deliver its programmes. While South Sudan has previously been a challenging working environment, making it difficult for WFP to attract and retain the staff it needs, the increased insecurity experienced in 2016 resulted in additional staffing challenges. South Sudan became the most dangerous country for humanitarian workers in 2016, based on the number of attacks perpetrated against both national and international staff.

In the aftermath of the July crisis in Juba, WFP along with other United Nations agencies evacuated international staff performing non-critical functions, with only staff involved in life-saving roles remaining in place. Evacuated staff worked remotely until their return was authorised by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in September, temporarily reducing WFP's staff presence. Operations were similarly affected by the evacuation of partner and contractor staff during this period. Furthermore, this disruption resulted in increased staff turnover in the second half of the year.

However, the brunt of heightened insecurity was in many ways borne by national staff. Through their closer integration with the surrounding communities, national staff were more exposed to the risks facing South Sudan's population at large than international staff, and in addition had to deal with the stress of danger to not only themselves but their families as well. The increasingly ethnic nature of South Sudan's conflict and the spreading of insecurity across South Sudan also increased the security risks facing national staff, and limited WFP's ability to deploy staff from certain ethnic groups to specific areas in the country more than previously experienced.

Achievements at Country Level

South Sudan faced very serious food security challenges in 2016, brought on by years of conflict and political instability coupled with a collapsing economy. Humanitarian relief and recovery activities were crucial to support affected populations, but were themselves confronted by increasing insecurity, resulting in the evacuation of significant numbers of humanitarian staff in July and August.

WFP responded flexibly to evolving needs, reprioritising its resources and adapting its activities. WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 4 million people across South Sudan – including lifesaving emergency assistance to over 3 million people. The scale of food assistance provided was substantial: WFP distributed more than 227,000 mt of food – 37,000 mt more than in 2015. In fact, August saw the largest number of beneficiaries reached in a single month since the start of the post-independence conflict, despite staff evacuations, and security and access challenges. In addition, WFP provided cash-based transfers valued at USD 13.8 million in 2016, monitoring markets closely to ensure the economic volatility did not render beneficiaries assisted with these modalities more vulnerable, and continued to roll out SCOPE, WFP's corporate system for beneficiary and transfer management, registering the biometric details of over 190,000 beneficiaries by the end of the year.

The food security situation has progressively deteriorated throughout the country since the outbreak of conflict in 2013. With the rising number of people facing acute hunger, WFP continued to scale up its operations in 2016. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal, where GAM rates were more than double the emergency threshold (33 percent) and nearly half of the population faced severe food insecurity, WFP scaled up its emergency response to provide 870,000 people with emergency food and nutrition assistance, alongside planned food assistance-for-assets (FFA) activities and school meals. The response contributed to a stabilisation in the food security situation, with less than 13 percent of households being found to be severely food insecure in December.

The deployment of the Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism (IRRM) was central to the relief operation, involving mobile teams dispatched to more than 80 hard-to-reach areas. These teams included staff from WFP, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies as well as NGO partners to provide a full package of food, nutrition and livelihood assistance along with emergency health and protection services.

Although South Sudan poses a restrictive and volatile environment, WFP and its partners have steadily increased the operational reach of IRRM teams, expanding their activities beyond the Greater Upper Nile region to assist the humanitarian response in hotspot locations like Yei (Central Equatoria), Wau (Western Bahr el Ghazal) and Northern Bahr el Ghazal. Over the course of the year, IRRM teams deployed for over 170 missions to provide assistance to 2 million people. In the Greater Upper Nile region, assistance helped reduce the proportion of food insecure households, as beneficiaries' food security improved compared to 2015, despite a deterioration in the population at large.

The scale of WFP's nutrition activities has grown each year since the beginning of the conflict, supported by the implementation of the UNICEF/WFP Joint Nutrition Response Plan. 2016 also saw further improvement in the continuum of care provided, as the two agencies strived to align cooperating partners between preventative activities and treatment programmes for moderate and severe acute malnutrition, coordinating through the nutrition cluster. The reach of WFP's prevention programmes grew by over 60 percent compared with 2015, and the treatment programme coverage met Sphere standards successfully across all assisted contexts. WFP also supported the successful development of the national Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) guidelines.

WFP's assistance also contributed to a clear reduction in the proportion of refugee households with poor food consumption.

While much of WFP's work in South Sudan was to provide life-saving assistance to populations affected by conflict and severe food insecurity, WFP also implemented resilience-building and recovery operations in more stable parts of the country. Through FFA programmes, WFP provided 405,000 people with food assistance in exchange for participation in community asset building activities, such as the creation of 12,200 hectares of group crop farming, production of 780,000 tree seedlings, and construction of nearly 100 km of flood control dykes and 372 km of community access roads. These assets help communities to manage resources, increase production, improve their food security and enhance their resilience to future shocks. In the context of generally deteriorating food security, the food assistance provided through FFA protected the beneficiaries from the full brunt of the crisis. In particular, households targeted for participation in FFA because of their severe food insecurity experienced a 30 percent improvement in the proportion of households with acceptable food consumption following WFP's activities.

Through its school feeding programme, WFP provided daily school meals to over 200,000 children alongside the provision of deworming tablets in collaboration with the Government of South Sudan, and take-home rations for girls in stable areas where gender parity in access to education was particularly poor. The school meals programme contributed to continued increasing enrolment in assisted primary schools, although worsening insecurity and displacement limited consistent attendance.

WFP was also able to continue strengthening small-holder farmer capacities and improve their access to markets, despite increased insecurity in the areas of implementation.

In addition to its own food assistance, WFP also supported the broader humanitarian and recovery efforts in the country through leadership in assessments and data collection, coordination, and common service provision. Through its large operational footprint, WFP also provided leadership on the implementation of humanitarian principles in South Sudan, engaging in continuous access negotiations with all parties in South Sudan's conflict and opening up humanitarian space.

WFP's active involvement in the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System, the Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Phase Classification process, regular market monitoring and a number of additional surveys enabled the humanitarian community to build their responses on solid information about needs. These efforts were also supported by the food security and livelihoods cluster, co-led by WFP and FAO, which leveraged its wide network of field partners to improve survey coverage.

As the crisis in South Sudan deepened during the course of the year, the WFP-led logistics cluster and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) scaled up their activities to enable a growing humanitarian response, surpassing original operational targets in many cases and contributing to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness. Under WFP's leadership, the emergency telecommunications cluster successfully transitioned its activities to a sustainable, cost-shared model of common service provision. All the common services provided by WFP continued to be met with high levels of satisfaction by their users.

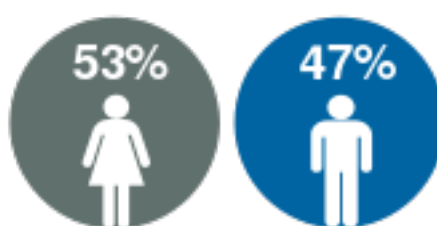
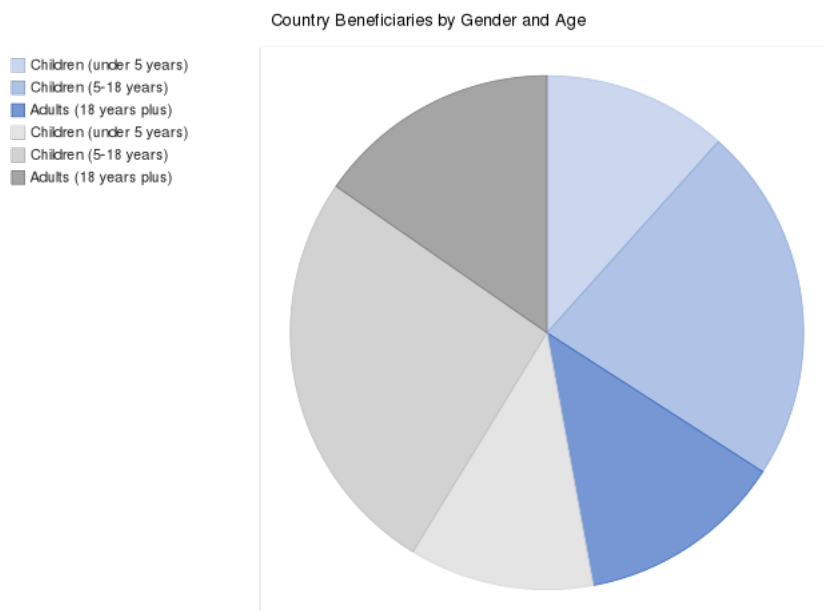
Despite security challenges which limited access, WFP also continued to support infrastructure development in South Sudan through feeder road construction and maintenance, improving farmers and communities' access to markets and basic services and increasing delivery efficiency for commercial and humanitarian cargo alike.



Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	467,928	467,928	935,856

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (5-18 years)	901,801	1,040,395	1,942,196
Adults (18 years plus)	522,194	616,628	1,138,822
Total number of beneficiaries in 2016	1,891,923	2,124,951	4,016,874



Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Single Country EMOP	111,737	6,008	11,650	8,941	685	139,020

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Single Country PRRO	67,785	4,008	6,295	8,895	537	87,520
Total Food Distributed in 2016	179,522	10,016	17,945	17,835	1,221	226,539

Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Single Country EMOP	-	9,562,581	-
Single Country PRRO	4,102,201	-	-
Total Distributed in 2016	4,102,201	9,562,581	-

Supply Chain

South Sudan has one of the most difficult supply chain contexts in the world, using three main corridors encompassing nine countries to bring goods from ports to delivery points in South Sudan. It is a landlocked country with limited or non-existing transport infrastructure. Almost the entire country becomes inaccessible by road during the rainy season, as all-weather roads are scarce, limiting connectivity between the capital and other main towns. It is also a food deficit country despite agricultural potential, and local food procurement options are very limited. The situation is further exacerbated by conflict and insecurity, hampering the movement of commercial and humanitarian goods alike. These challenges, combined with burgeoning humanitarian needs, require careful planning, good coordination, prioritisation and risk management to ensure the delivery of assistance through the most efficient and effective means possible.

In 2016, WFP deployed road, air and river transport to deliver its assistance, and used three main logistics corridors to bring goods into South Sudan:

1. the Northern Corridor – transport by road from Port Sudan through Kosti (in Sudan) to Upper Nile State (11 percent of total tonnage);
2. the Eastern Corridor – overland transport from the port of Djibouti through Nazareth to Gambella/Jimma in Ethiopia (14 percent of total tonnage). From here 90 percent of cargo is airdropped into the Greater Upper Nile, while the remainder is transported by road and river; and
3. the Southern Corridor – transport by road from the ports of Mombasa in Kenya and Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania, or from Tororo in Uganda, to Juba or to forward hubs in Bor (southern Jonglei), Rumbek (Lakes), Wau (Western Bahr El Ghazal), Aweil (Northern Bahr El Ghazal) and Wunrok (Warrap State) (75 percent of total tonnage).

The total tonnage transported by WFP's logistics operation in South Sudan was over 265,000 mt, over 70 percent of which was transported on roads, some 23 percent by air, and the remainder by river. Because overland access is so limited during the rainy season, pre-positioning food and nutrition commodities in strategic locations around the country during the dry season is critical for the continuity of assistance. It also enhances cost-efficiency by limiting the need to use the more expensive air transport options. WFP's pre-positioning plan relied on an extensive transport and warehousing network, and was based on a risk analysis of all potential pre-positioning sites. WFP's 2016 pre-positioning exercise was successful, putting in place over 100,000 mt, or 85 percent, of its pre-positioning plan in 2016, despite the challenging operating environment. Some delays in funding availability limited the full implementation of the pre-positioning plan.

In areas where the risks of pre-positioning were deemed unacceptably high, or funding allocation, procurement and delivery were not possible during the dry season window of opportunity, assistance was delivered through a "just-in-time" approach, often using airlifts or airdrops to bring food to the areas of distribution.

The country office purchased nearly all of the food items it procured from the Global Commodity Management Facility (a global WFP mechanism for improved food supply chain management), benefitting from reduced

lead-times, as the main procurement process had already been carried out by the time funds were available in South Sudan; and from enhanced cost-efficiency and economies of scale, as the GCMF had purchased commodities in bulk at favourable market prices. The commodities purchased by the country office through the GCMF included sorghum, maize, pulses (beans and yellow peas), fortified vegetable oil, SuperCereal and SuperCereal Plus, and the ready-to-use supplementary food Plumpy'Sup. Much of the food purchased through the GCMF was sourced regionally, and in addition, WFP further supported regional economies by purchasing salt from Kenya. Through its Purchase-for-Progress (P4P) activities, WFP was also able to buy maize locally despite security challenges in the areas of implementation, contributing to the development of South Sudan's agricultural sector and small-farmer livelihoods.

WFP's supply chain management also included cash-based transfer (CBT) modalities. In close coordination with WFP's programme and vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) teams, the logistics team conducted retailer assessments, reviewed wholesaler capacities and identified market supply chain risks to support modality selection. It also supported retailer monitoring and the physical management of paper vouchers.

The deterioration in the overall security environment from July onwards presented additional challenges to WFP's supply chain in 2016. In the security vacuum which ensued the renewed fighting in Juba, WFP's main warehouse in the city was looted. Over 4,600 mt of food items were looted, which impacted the supply of specialised nutritious foods in particular. In addition, physical assets such as various spare parts, workshop equipment, lubricants, diesel, trucks and light vehicles were lost to the incident. The country's overall economic decline resulted in a continued deterioration of transport infrastructure, such as roads and airstrips, from lack of maintenance. Political instability contributed to an increase in administrative clearance requirements placed on humanitarian activities in the country, and airdrops from Ethiopia had to be halted for a total of 6 weeks as government authorities did not provide the necessary clearances to operate the flights. These requirements rendered the importation of food and non-food items more difficult and hindered movement within the country, creating delays in the supply chain.

Despite these challenges, WFP continued its efforts to improve the efficiency of its supply chain. In addition to carrying out the large-scale pre-positioning exercise and delivering cargo through the most cost-effective corridors, WFP further expanded the use of the GCMF by over 30 percent. WFP also initiated the process of opening new overland corridors from Sudan to north-western South Sudan, and increased direct overland deliveries from Kenya and Uganda to forward hubs beyond Juba to reduce handling and transshipment costs. The cost-effectiveness of air transport also improved, as WFP developed the capability to airdrop specialised nutritious foods, previously delivered by helicopter airlift, increasing overall delivery volumes and reducing the per tonne air delivery cost for these food items by 85 percent.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Corn Soya Blend	-	397	397
Iodised Salt	-	691	691
Maize	70	-	70
Sorghum/Millet	-	1,100	1,100
Split Peas	-	81	81
Total	70	2,269	2,339
Percentage	3.0%	97.0%	

Annual Global Commodity Management Facility Purchases Received in Country (mt)

Commodity	Total
Beans	6,314
Corn Soya Blend	18,805
Maize	20,724
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	895
Sorghum/Millet	71,182
Split Peas	3,402
Vegetable Oil	4,025
Total	125,347

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Contextual developments in South Sudan in 2016 very clearly highlighted the importance of operational adaptability and flexibility between emergency response and recovery-oriented activities, as the previously geographic demarcation of conflict and non-conflict areas became less clear. This adaptability, coupled with longer-term funding for resilience-building activities and a perspective to incorporating recovery and resilience perspectives in humanitarian work, was also found to be critical in recent external evaluations of the overall humanitarian and development engagement in South Sudan [1].

In response to the changes in the operational context, WFP carried out budget revisions of its emergency and protracted relief and recovery operations in 2016, extending their duration and shifting their scope. In 2017, the emergency operation will therefore cover relief and nutrition activities across South Sudan, with the protracted relief and recovery operation focusing on livelihoods and resilience activities, school feeding and agricultural market development, while continuing to support the refugee populations hosted in the country. This arrangement is intended to allow more streamlined management of activities, creating operational coherence around objectives and contexts instead of imposing a geographic division between operations.

The spreading of conflict into previously more stable areas required the deployment of the Integrated Rapid Response Mechanism (IRRM) into new areas in 2016. In addition to this expansion, the IRRM modality also matured, building increasingly on the enhanced mobile capacities of the IRRM partner network to carry out rapid response distributions, thus improving efficiency and effectiveness and allowing WFP to focus more on coordination, prioritisation, beneficiary registration and logistics delivery. WFP will further streamline the way new mobile response sites are integrated into its overall programme prioritisation to consolidate the relief-recovery continuum and contribute to improved programme effectiveness. Furthermore, scaling up biometric beneficiary registration with the use of WFP's beneficiary and distribution management tool, SCOPE, in IRRM areas will also enhance programme effectiveness by supporting more accurate targeting of highly mobile and displaced populations.

To strengthen the transition from relief to recovery, WFP with its cooperating partner Oxfam started to implement increasingly conditional relief activities in parts of the Greater Upper Nile in 2016. These activities aimed to serve as a bridge between the extended unconditional food assistance provided to conflict-affected populations and full-fledged recovery and livelihoods activities, where pockets of stability appeared. They helped lay the ground work for the type of community engagement and ownership associated with WFP's food assistance-for-assets activities. Successful projects in 2016 encouraged WFP to further expand this approach, and WFP's programme team was developing a standard operating procedure for conditional general distributions at the end of the reporting period to support the envisaged scale-up.

Volatile, complex emergency contexts present challenges to ensuring accountability to affected populations, and this aspect was found to require further focus in the recent Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation in South Sudan as well as WFP's own internal programme monitoring. Recognising the high-level of protection risks and concerns presented by the operational environment, WFP has invested heavily in fully mainstreaming protection into its

activities. In 2016, increased emphasis was placed on accountability issues as well, with two beneficiary complaints and feedback mechanism projects under way in the protection of civilians (POC) sites at the end of the reporting period. Both projects will be taken forward in 2017, sharing experiences and best practices as their scale will increase, and their expansion to broader rural settings and conditional activities will also be explored.

Through internal reviews, WFP also drew valuable lessons for its supply chain and asset management systems from the security challenges experienced in Juba and across supply routes. The country office put in place several measures to mitigate future risks to WFP's stocks and assets.

Recognising the potential for exacerbating insecurity going forward, WFP's warehouse risk assessments were expanded to cover partners' warehouses as well to support warehouse improvements and supply chain planning that reduces the quantities of stocks in higher risk locations. The country office also acquired dedicated storage space for its operation in Tororo, Uganda, to reduce the overall stock levels previously kept in Juba, and identified space for the storage of larger quantities of assets and spare parts in its main compound in the capital so that items which are needed on the spot would be more protected from potential incidents. The country office also decided to put in place additional security measures for staff, such as ordering additional personal protection equipment, increasing staff food stocks, and constructing another bunker. To mitigate the risk of attacks on cargo transported by road, WFP organised a convoy system for all cargo deliveries, ensuring that all commercially hired trucks are clearly flagged and accompanied by two international convoy monitors and two WFP fleet trucks.

WFP's cluster operations and common services will also implement lessons drawn from activities carried out in 2016. The logistics cluster will continue to have a dedicated UNHAS focal point embedded in its team to support mobile response missions. This arrangement was found to facilitate mission request prioritisation and enable better synchronisation in cargo delivery and passenger transport for the missions. While the food security and livelihoods cluster's coordination activities were faced with the dual challenge of internal staffing gaps and reduced partner presence on the ground after the July crisis, the recruitment of a new cluster coordinator in November enabled the cluster to re-establish its partnership network which will be further strengthened in 2017.

WFP's Office of Evaluation commissioned a Country Portfolio Evaluation of WFP's activities in South Sudan in 2011-2016. The evaluation focuses on the alignment and appropriateness of WFP's strategy in the country, the quality and factors affecting strategic decision-making, and the performance of WFP's portfolio. The evaluation was underway at the end of the reporting period, and its recommendations will inform the implementation of WFP's activities in 2017 and the drafting of WFP's interim Country Strategic Plan for South Sudan.

[1] Norad South Sudan Country Evaluation Brief 2016; Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation, OCHA 2015.

WFP South Sudan: Country Office Focuses on Gender Equality

In South Sudan, decades of war and entrenched patriarchal social and cultural norms drive gender inequalities and discriminatory practices which heavily affect the relationships between women and men and boys and girls. While the years of conflict have affected all sexes as seen in high levels of displacement, poverty and food insecurity, women and girls have continue to be disproportionately vulnerable to these effects. Changing traditional cultural practices around gender roles is difficult in any context. While conflict and instability may to some extent force changes in these roles, for example as women engage in broader economic activity while men are involved in military activity, these changes may not lead to permanent shifts in the beliefs surrounding women's and men's capabilities, responsibilities and rights. Heightened insecurity and increasing economic pressure on households and communities is in any case a source of further gender-related tension.

Despite a challenging year, WFP in South Sudan continued to take forward its commitment to promote and embed gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) across its operations, recognising that the foundation for doing so lies in the frameworks and processes it puts in place to plan and implement its work, in the knowledge and capabilities of its staff, and in active advocacy in the national and inter-agency humanitarian and development arenas.

The country office has a gender strategy in place to guide its gender-sensitive programming and activities. The strategy seeks to ensure that all of WFPs' projects are informed by gender analysis and include gender-responsive activities and related gender outcomes to provide a programme relevant to the distinct needs of women, men, girls and boys; that the country office continues to increase the quality and quantity of sex- and age-disaggregated monitoring and assessment data to support gender-sensitive programmatic decision-making; that all of WFP's staff understand and internalise WFP's gender policy and their roles in its implementation through their daily work; and that partner activities on the ground fully support the achievement of shared gender objectives.

In 2016, WFP South Sudan undertook a gender needs assessment using the International Labour Organisation participatory gender audit methodology to establish a baseline of performance and examine whether internal practices and related support systems for gender mainstreaming were effective and mutually reinforcing. Overall, the audit report concluded that a lot of progress had been made in mainstreaming GEWE in WFP South Sudan. The audit recommended that gender mainstreaming continue to be strengthened, particularly in units beyond programme and in WFP's offices in the field, and that partners' gender capacities be further developed. The implementation of these recommendations was underway during the reporting year, and will continue in 2017 and beyond.

The country office invested in capacity strengthening for its staff. Gender clinics were organised for specific units including logistics, information and communications technology (ICT), emergency response, programme, finance and administration, and procurement to create awareness among staff on their role in gender mainstreaming. General gender capacity augmentation workshops were organised in March and June 2016 at the country office, with over 250 staff from all levels and units including sub- and field offices in attendance.

Particular attention was paid to ensure men's engagement in the office's gender equality activities, encouraging them to support women and to sensitise both men and women on gender roles, family planning, and economic empowerment. In October 2016, the country office launched the WFP Men for Gender Equality group to provide a platform for men's regular contribution to discussions around gender issues. Within weeks, more than 160 male staff had joined the group. The first event organised by the group involved a panel discussion with men and women participants on the differentiated effects of South Sudan's conflict on women, men, girls and boys.

WFP took advocacy on gender equality and women's rights as a key part of its work, playing a leading role in organising related events in South Sudan. A high point in 2016 was the organisation of the first official celebration of the Rural Women's Day in South Sudan, in partnership with UN Women, and the ministries of Gender, Child and Social Welfare; Agriculture and Food Security; and Roads and Bridges. WFP hosted the event and dozens of members of the public attended the celebration, which was also complemented by a sustained media campaign including a specific radio message from WFP's Country Director. The Government showed its strong commitment to improving gender equality and women's rights in South Sudan, and WFP cemented its role as a key advocate on issues of gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the country.

WFP also took a leading role in the efforts by the United Nations Country Team to improve gender balance in the organisation's workforce. The human resources unit engaged in the development of a gender-sensitive recruitment strategy for WFP which will feed into the United Nations-wide strategy in South Sudan.

Corporately, WFP has recognised the country office's engagement on issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. In May 2016, South Sudan, along with Myanmar and Peru, won the WFP "Award for Excellence in

Gender Equality” for its efforts to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment within programmatic and operational work.

The award report stated that WFP South Sudan had showed outstanding commitment to creating conditions for gender equality and women's empowerment. The country office had worked persistently to strengthen gender mainstreaming in its operations and had tracked and reported on its achievements in a Gender Annual Report. To translate the positive steps into gender transformative results, long-term vision and strategic investments were recommended at least until 2020 to strengthen competencies for gender mainstreaming. The report also recommended that the country office continue shifting from an output-based approach focused on participation to a more robust outcome-oriented model aimed at transforming unequal and discriminatory relations between women, men, boys and girls, and achieving gender equality. The country office drafted a new Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 to take this major shift forward.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

The operational context in South Sudan is extremely complex and challenging for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Communication and information management is essential to an effective emergency response. Yet, South Sudan has one of the most underdeveloped communications technology infrastructures in the world. Years of civil conflict and warfare have inhibited growth across the sector, discouraging both public and private investments. The absence of a national communications backbone, the unreliability of the mobile network and the lack of access to conventional power sources have created challenges for the deployment of telecommunications services, particularly in the rural communities where the majority of affected populations live.

Since the eruption of conflict in late 2013, the little telecommunications infrastructure that existed has been badly affected. The lack of critical telecommunications infrastructure, especially in opposition-controlled areas, resulted in constrained access to life-saving information, thus severely affecting both the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and the ability of the affected population to recover.

The emergency telecommunications cluster (ETC) has been active in South Sudan since 2011, shortly after its separation from Sudan, and had significantly scaled up its activities in response to the 2013 conflict. Taking into consideration the number of United Nations agencies, and international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) present in South Sudan, the humanitarian community requested the ETC to continue its role in coordinating and supporting emergency telecommunications services to provide reliable access to security and operational information in 2016.

Special operation 200931 was in line with WFP's Strategic Objective 1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies. It contributed primarily to Strategic Objective 1, "Save lives and alleviate suffering through safe access to services and resources with dignity", of the South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan (the annual common response plan for the humanitarian community in the country). The cluster operation had three specific objectives in 2016:

- Cluster Objective 1: Coordinate and support the humanitarian community in the assessment, deployment and development of emergency telecommunications services for reliable access to security communications and key information; facilitate inter-agency projects as well as evaluate potential ETC services to affected population.
- Cluster Objective 2: Establish contingency stocks of ETC equipment in country to response to critical information and communications technology requirements in identified common operational areas.
- Cluster Objective 3: Provide the humanitarian community with capacity-strengthening opportunities in emergency telecommunications sector.

This special operation succeeded previous ETC operations 200791 (in 2015) and 200399 (in 2014). Recognizing that the cluster's role as a provider of "last resort" had significantly reduced with the proliferation of commercial service providers, the ETC was deactivated at the end of 2016 when special operation 200931 drew to a close. However, WFP will continue to manage the cluster's services under an information technology Technical Working Group as an inter-agency service provider on a cost-sharing basis.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	609,701
Direct Support Costs	10,000
Indirect Support Costs	43,379
Total	663,080

Project Activities

Since its activation, the emergency telecommunications cluster (ETC) has provided crucial emergency telecommunications services to the humanitarian community in South Sudan, including radio communications, internet connectivity, renewable power, technical support, and capacity strengthening activities.

In 2016, the ETC focused on supporting the humanitarian community through coordination, partnership-building and service brokerage. Although the ETC continued to hand over the management of its internet services to identified on-site lead organizations, it still provided leadership and support to all common information and communications technology projects and explored new required activities and services as the humanitarian response expanded to new areas. The cluster also maintained its key function as provider of “last resort” for services not available in the commercial market.

The ETC continued to maintain the vital radio-based security telecommunications established since 2010, and operated several 24-hour Communications Centres (COMCEN). In an effort to continuously improve security telecommunications, the analogue radio telecommunications system will be upgraded into a digital system. In 2016, the cluster put in place infrastructures required for a digital mobile radio (DMR) system which offered humanitarian workers enhanced security features such as Global Positioning System tracking, text messaging, closed group calls, and direct dialing.

The ETC carried on the implementation of a long-term solution for data connectivity needs through Humanitarian Internet Support Project (HISP). The HISP was developed and managed by WFP as the global emergency telecommunications cluster lead. The cluster began deploying the project in South Sudan before the conflict started in mid-December 2013, focusing on the existing information and communications technology infrastructures as part of a strategy to phase out its normal front-line services. The HISP was a sustainable solution developed to replace the donor-funded ETC internet service and was part of an exit strategy to reduce reliance on ETC services. It was based on a cost-sharing scheme among actors intervening in a particular location. The cluster had initiated brokering of services between humanitarian organizations and the available local service providers in several locations.

Pursuant to the global emergency telecommunication cluster's "ETC 2020" strategy and the challenges experienced in 2015 resulting from persistent fuel shortages, the South Sudan ETC invested in integrating environmentally-friendly energy solutions with emergency response. In 2016, the standard design in the ETC response package included hybrid solar energy power sources. This yields multiple benefits in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability: it lowers costs over time by reducing reliance on expensive fuel for generators; it lessens the downtime of communications which can occur during fuel shortages; and it reduces the overall carbon footprint of the humanitarian operation in South Sudan.

The cluster also carried out capacity strengthening and training activities, in particular in preparation to the migration to the new DMR security telecommunications system.

Although the ETC was deactivated on 31 December 2016, and the cluster's free-to-user services were discontinued, the head of WFP's information technology unit will remain as the focal point for the Information Technology Technical Working Group composed of United Nations agencies and NGOs. Under this set-up, a number of services will be maintained on a cost-sharing basis.

Cluster membership agreed that the installed radio signal repeaters and COMCENs would be maintained by WFP under the inter-agency services, and telecommunications infrastructure equipment (very high-frequency repeaters) will remain operational as the transition to the DMR system is undertaken.

The HISP will remain operational in Aweil, Bentiu, Bor, Malakal and Mingkaman, where it will continue to provide self-reliant data connectivity services through the existing infrastructure on a cost-sharing basis. In addition, HISP will be expanded to three more state capitals in 2017.

ETC equipment that is no longer required will be donated to lead agencies in support of the cluster's "ETC 2020" strategy that seeks to strengthen the emergency telecommunications capacity of local humanitarian organizations that will enable innovative and more effective humanitarian assistance.

Operational Partnerships

The network of emergency telecommunications cluster (ETC) partners enabled the cluster to efficiently and effectively provide the necessary technology, tools, services and response solutions needed to support the humanitarian response in South Sudan. In particular, the cluster maintained operational partnerships with the United Nations Department for Safety and Security, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United

Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and the NGO Forum (focal point for both national and international NGOs in South Sudan). In total, some 120 partners benefited from ETC services in 2016.

The ETC worked regularly with partner United Nations agencies, national and international NGOs and the host government to provide security telecommunications, advisory and technical support, and coordination functions through engagement of the local working group, the NGO Forum and the inter-cluster working group. Specifically, the ETC was involved in the identification of its response priorities through the inter-cluster working group. In addition, the ETC provided dedicated and secured communications applications and a coordination forum by brokering services between the humanitarian community and local service providers, and directly providing connectivity through sustainable solutions such as the Humanitarian Internet Support Project.

Globally, the cluster partnered with emergency.lu and Ericsson Response to deploy and support data connectivity equipment. Emergency.lu is a public-private partnership between the Government of Luxembourg and three Luxembourg companies from the information and communications technology and medical transport sectors, supporting humanitarian action across the world since 2012. Ericsson Response was founded in 2000 and was a volunteer initiative of the Swedish telecommunications company Ericsson, deploying employees and telecommunications equipment to support the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations in times of disaster. Both partnerships provided additional communications expertise, equipment and resources to contribute to a better and faster response in humanitarian emergencies.

Results/Outcomes

Strategic Objective: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies (SO1), Outcome 4: National institutions, regional bodies and the humanitarian community are able to prepare for, assess and respond to emergencies.

The emergency telecommunications cluster (ETC) contributed significantly to the success of the humanitarian response, which provided lifesaving assistance and protection to the affected communities, through the provision and maintenance of security telecommunications and data connectivity services in conflict-affected states. These vital communications services also facilitated logistical operations by improving coordination and security management.

Through its responsiveness to the cluster user needs, the ETC operation was able to meet and exceed its target for the quality of services provided. An online survey of ETC members conducted in September 2016 showed a significant improvement in user satisfaction against the last available baseline data (December 2014).

The survey showed that 83 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the Humanitarian Internet Support Project (HISP) service, which provided low-cost, long-term and reliable satellite-based data connectivity that enhanced operational response and coordination. In 2015, five sites (Aweil in Northern Bahr El Ghazal State; Bentiu, Bor, and Mingkaman in Unity State; and Malakal in Upper Nile State) were targeted for conversion to the HISP and by the end of 2015, the conversion had been completed in all location, except Bentiu. In 2016, the cluster continued the HISP project and completed the migration of data connectivity service to HISP system in Bentiu. At the end of the year, the HISP solution was working in all five locations, with 14 HISP accounts subscribed to by United Nations agencies, 40 by international NGOs and 11 accounts by national NGOs. Each account enables multiple users to access data connectivity services. In total, the HISP had 720 registered users. The 17 dissatisfaction rate with the HISP can in part be attributed to the saturation of the system in Bentiu. HISP served over 250 users in Bentiu, and the user management system roll-out was still ongoing when the survey was conducted.

The cluster provided *ad hoc* data connectivity services in three operational areas. Based on the needs of humanitarian agencies on the ground, these services were put in place in Koch, Leer and Wau.

The user survey also showed that 92 percent were satisfied with the provision of radio communication services, and 84 percent with radio programming services provided by the cluster. Radio-based security telecommunications is widely used and is considered a reliable means for coordination among emergency rapid responders and field officers delivering humanitarian assistance. The ETC continued to maintain vital radio-based security telecommunications in 23 locations throughout the country, and operated 24-hour Communication Centres in 15 locations including 10 state capitals and the Abyei Administrative State.

The cluster implemented the infrastructure required to introduce the Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) system, and conducted a series of "Let's Comm Digital" trainings for about 50 information technology technicians in preparation for the DMR deployment. The transition to the DMR project will continue as an inter-agency service in 2017. The

ETC also programmed over 2,000 handheld radios and very high-frequency radios in vehicles, meeting all programming requests. Radio user training was also provided to over 300 humanitarian workers in South Sudan. The "Let's Comm Digital" training, which was followed up with a practical training on the installation of DMR equipment into vehicles, has prepared the agencies for the successful migration to the DMR system.

Story Worth Telling

Sustainable Data Connectivity Enhances Response in Bentiu

As a service-based cluster, the South Sudan emergency telecommunications cluster (ETC) supported hundreds of humanitarian organizations, such as Concern Worldwide, by providing security telecommunications and data connectivity services as well as information and communications technology technical support. Concern Worldwide is one of many organizations active in Bentiu that supported internally displaced people through water, sanitation and hygiene projects, and the provision of shelter and non-food items (NFIs) as well as nutrition services. These critical services must be programmed, coordinated and delivered in a timely manner to reduce the impact of South Sudan's crisis on the people affected.

Bentiu is a town within Rubkona County in the Greater Upper Nile. Prior to the 2013 conflict, it was a community with an estimated 20,000 inhabitants, and had limited markets, primarily geared towards serving the basic needs of the local population. When the crisis erupted, tens of thousands of internally displaced people very quickly gathered under the protection of the United Nations Mission of South Sudan peacekeeping troops. In 2016, Bentiu had nearly 200,000 internally displaced people who were supported by the humanitarian community.

The humanitarian operation in the area is dependent on logistics support from Juba through road and air access. All basic infrastructure and supplies required by the operation – rubble halls for warehouses, office equipment, office supplies, containers for office space, containers for staff accommodation, drinking water, food and NFIs for distributions to the people in need, vehicles for monitoring, generators to supply electricity, and even fuel to power the generators – have to be brought in, mainly from Juba. Bentiu had no mobile network when ETC started supporting the town, and to enable the emergency responders to effectively communicate with each other in the field as well as with their colleagues in Juba, communications facilities had to be provided through radios and data connectivity.

The connected mobile network in Bentiu was recently restored, but it has limited coverage and is unreliable due to fuel shortages that affected the generators used to power the network. Therefore, radio communication services provided by the ETC continue to be used not only for security communication, but also in daily field operation and coordination activities. Radio communication was mostly appropriate for transmitting short messages, and did not allow the sending and receiving of documents. This was why the ETC had also provided satellite-based internet connectivity services in Bentiu.

A free-to-user data service provided by the ETC was always a temporary solution, and the cluster had been migrating its data services to a cost-shared model under the Humanitarian Internet Support Project (HISP) since 2015. In this model, humanitarian agencies in a given location came together as a group and agreed to buy the data services from the cluster. The ETC then procured the services from local service providers on behalf of the group of agencies and managed the service, leveraging its expertise and the group's combined purchasing power. As the data services in Bentiu were migrated to the HISP in 2016, Concern Worldwide was among the agencies to join in. The NGO was very pleased with the cost-efficiency gains it had been able to achieve with data connectivity.

"Through the data connectivity service managed by ETC, we were able to operate efficiently. I can do skype conferencing with our office in Juba, which is less costly than flying all the way to Juba to attend meetings," said Armogast Mwasi, Area Coordinator for Concern Worldwide in Bentiu.

When planning their interventions, humanitarian agencies like Concern have to consider many variables, such as the changing numbers of people in need on the ground due to population movements, security constraints that may hinder operations, and logistical constraints affecting the delivery of goods by road during the rainy season. The exchange of information between field operations and country offices is critical for effective decision-making. ETC services have made a significant contribution to the humanitarian response in South Sudan by enabling the operations of organizations like Concern Worldwide for greater impact.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

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Caption: Emergency telecommunications cluster (ETC) technician John Mawa is installing satellite communications equipment at a UNICEF compound in Pibor, Jonglei State. Since its activation in 2011, the WFP-led ETC has provided vital emergency telecommunications services to the humanitarian community in South Sudan.

Output indicators:

The two inter-agency projects planned for 2016 were the Humanitarian Internet Support Project (HISP) and the Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) project.

The indicator on operational areas covered refers to ad hoc data connectivity services only as per the project's output planning.

Project Indicators

Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
SO1 Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies				
National institutions, regional bodies and the humanitarian community are able to prepare for, assess and respond to emergencies				
User satisfaction rate				
<i>CLUSTER SERVICE USERS, Project End Target: 2016.12, <i>User Feedback Survey, Base value: 2014.12, WFP survey, <i>User Feedback Survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.09, WFP survey, <i>User Feedback Survey</i></i></i></i>	>80.00	72.00	-	83.00

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO1: Special Operation (ICT)				
Number of UN agency and NGO staff trained	individual	300	300	100.0%
Number of inter-agency projects facilitated and completed	project	2	1	50.0%
Number of operational areas covered by data communications services	operational area	3	3	100.0%
Number of training sessions / workshops organized	training session	3	3	100.0%
Percentage of radio programming requests from the humanitarian community to ETC addressed	%	90	100	111.1%