

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES



Annual Partnership Consultation (APC) 2020

Partnering in the New Normal

Summary Report



Contents

APC 2020 Welcome!	4
A Dialogue on Partnering in the New Normal	4
Stronger Together: Supply Chains in the Pandemic	5
Social Protection: Building Blocks for a Long-term Vision	6
Re-opening Schools: Partnering to Ensure a Generation Isn't Left Behind	7
Mothers, Masks and MUAC: Ensuring Nutrition Services in the Time of COVID-19	7
Resilient Food Systems: Towards the 2021 Food Systems Summit	8
Field Security: from dialogue to action in the new normal	10
Duty of Care and Localization: From Standards to Implementation	10
Harmonizing NGO Partnerships as the UN	12
Working Together Better: Field Level Agreements	13
Strategic Opportunities	15
Open Feedback	15
Wrap up and Steps Before We Next Meet	16
Missed the sessions live?	16

Session Highlights

The WFP Annual Partnership Consultation (APC 2020) was held online from 19-23 October 2020. The overall theme of the Consultation was “Partnering in the New Normal” which allowed for all sessions to reflect on what parts of our joint COVID-19 emergency response worked, what we could have done better and how, as partners, we can intensify efforts to save and change lives in the age of the pandemic. The agenda was decided on after wide consultations with partners as well as with WFP colleagues at HQ level, in the Regional Bureaux and Country Offices.

APC 2020 was WFP’s first online consultation with NGO partners and although the lack of face to face interaction was missed, the online format allowed for wider, more inclusive participation. The agenda was made up of 14 sessions across the week, was attended by over 200 partners from 46 organizations and 134 WFP colleagues from all over the world.

A recording of each session and who participated can be found on the [APC 2020 website](#).

APC 2020 Welcome!

Valeri Guarnieri, WFP’s Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, opened APC 2020 by playing a [Welcome Video Message from the Executive Director](#), David Beasley who stressed that the recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to WFP was an honour to be shared with partners who were an integral part of saving and changing lives. To set the stage of the overall theme, Partnering in the New Normal, Valerie then played a video on what the new normal means to them, what some of the challenges have been and what they have learned.

A Dialogue on Partnering in the New Normal

Following on from the welcome, Valerie moderated this first substantive session of APC 2020 which was the scene setter for the week. It looked at what we are facing in terms of economic and social impact, and what we as partners can do to be prepared for the shifting scenarios that are emerging. The discussions were kicked off by a presentation by Melinda Kuritzky who is the Lead of Global Risks and Geopolitical Agenda for the World Economic Forum (WEF). Her main message revolved around

the need for more robust risk forecasting with her findings based on three risk surveys – the Global Risks Perception Survey, COVID-19 Risks Perception Survey and the Executive Opinion Survey. Since the start of the pandemic the short and long terms risks had shifted from a focus on the environment to risks to economies such as un- or under-employment, the spread of infectious diseases and fiscal crises. For 2021 the forecasted risks include aggravated divisions

THE PANEL

A Dialogue on Partnering in the New Normal

Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, WFP (*Moderator*)

Melinda Kuritzky, Lead, Global Risks and Geopolitical Agenda, World Economic Forum (*Keynote*)

Arif Husain, Chief Economist & Director at WFP, WFP

Ken Isaacs, Vice President, Programs and Government Relations, Samaritan’s Purse

Margot van der Velden, Director of Emergencies, WFP

in geopolitical tensions, societal fracture such as the breakdown in food security, and risks to the individual. A further longer-term risk is a failure to act on climate change. More information on the WEF risk forecasting is [available online](#).

The next presentation was by Arif Hussain, WFP’s Chief Economist who reminded participants that even before COVID-19 there were 690 million chronically food insecure, 130 million acutely food insecure, 80 million forcibly displaced, 144 million stunted children, and 47 million wasted, equalling 8.1 trillion people at risk. Conflicts continued and there are more climate extremes and variabilities which have doubled in 20 years shifting or shortening agricultural seasons. Currencies were tanking and debts and inflation were on the rise. COVID-19 took this bad situation and made it worse. A global contraction of between 5% – 8% is expected, remittances are down and 495 million jobs have been lost in the second quarter of the year. The response has been unprecedented with governments big and small spending 17 trillion dollars to stabilize their economies and debts are being rescheduled, but the abilities of governments to respond in this way next year are not going to be there.

Looking forward he said we need to focus on five things. The first is to continue to reach people in areas suffering from emergencies who have no hope but the humanitarian sector. We need to make sure low- and middle-income countries have the fiscal resources to implement their own social protection programmes. The commercial sector must work – both for the big logistics and the last mile. Good trade policies must continue and while we have global food stocks for this year, unless the agricultural sector is kept supplied, there will be future food shortages. We must also keep the pressure on to end all conflicts by adhering to the Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire. The overall message is that in the future we will have to do a lot more with a lot less.

Margot van der Velden, WFP Director of Emergencies, gave her outlook on the most pressing issues, one of which was that we have not been prepared enough and don't have the platforms in place to respond to emergencies. We need to be more efficient and be prepared for mega trends. With COVID-19 we suddenly lost physical access to people and markets and couldn't get the information on what was going on which created tensions. Remote technology is starting to fill the gaps, but we need to make sure the data we collect is protected and that we are a driving force for any ethical issues with new technologies. The COVID-19 pandemic has also strengthened pre-existing inequalities and we should advocate strongly for a whole society approach making sure the voices most in need are not lost as the most vulnerable often slip through social protection nets. We need to make sure our local partners can continue to work even though it's often local resources that are cut first.

She stressed that partnerships need to work differently bringing together the assets of the public and private sectors and that all players must work together. We also need to strongly advocate for the resources we need and for flexible and common approaches to donors. Duty of care for humanitarians is a key priority including access to health care, and the safety of staff in volatile places. She ended by pointing out that the pandemic is not over, we have a long way to go and, as vaccines become available, we need to make sure that access to them is fair.

The final panellist in this session was Ken Isaacs, Vice President, Programs and Government Relations, Samaritan's Purse (SP). He described how his organization quickly refocused as the pandemic started despite the challenges presented by travel restrictions, broken supply chains and the extra burden of many staff being ill. He noted that we need to partner on travel and logistical services and that his organization was now using their own aircraft much more both for cargo and staff. He raised a concern that even before the pandemic the number

of young people joining the humanitarian sector was dwindling and it had become even harder to recruit people because of lockdown. He reminded us that the crises in Yemen and Syria still existed and the places that had made the headlines last year such as South Sudan, North Korea and Venezuela were not being talked about as much as they had been even though the situation had not changed. He believes that now, more than ever, we need to advocate together to keep them on the agenda of donors.

Stronger Together: Supply Chains in the Pandemic

The first panellist of this session, moderated by Simona Beltrami, WFP's Editorial Content Coordinator, was Stephen Cahill, WFP's Director of Logistics and Field Support. Stephen stressed that supply chains were at the core of what the humanitarian sector does and that they not only allow us to deliver on our goals, but also to pre-empt disruptions and develop contingency plans. He noted that in general they rely heavily on the private sector but as an emergency develops, the private sector can withdraw. This means it is essential to make sure that we have the expertise in place for operational continuity. Supply chains need to be a core part of service delivery and an integral part of the response which makes the early consideration of supply chain in planning critical. While costs need to be driven down - studies have shown that between 60% - 80% of all costs go on the supply chain, agility is important while efficiencies are needed. Also, preparedness is important as every dollar spent on preparedness gives 4 dollars in response. Preparedness in supply chains should therefore be seen as an investment not a cost.

Baptiste Burgaud, Head of Field Support for WFP, highlighted that the relationships between WFP and NGOs are very diverse and we interact in many ways often managing supply chains for each other. This relationship has evolved from being transactional to something much stronger. To meet the challenges ahead we need even stronger relationships across the board from grassroots NGO to the larger INGO.

Stephane Courteheuse, the third panellist, said that from his perspective as the Freight Operator for Médecins Sans Frontières, he had appreciated the

Stronger Together: Supply Chain Before, During and Beyond COVID-19

Simona Beltrami, Editorial Content Coordinator, WFP
(Moderator)

Stephen Cahill, Director of Logistics and Field Support, WFP

Baptiste Burgaud, Head of Field Support, WFP

Stéphane Courteheuse, Freight Operator, Médecins Sans Frontières

THE PANEL

way that WFP had kept the supply chains running throughout the pandemic and had stepped in as the private sector pulled out. His organization had greatly benefitted from the services they offered.

One of the challenges highlighted by the panel was strengthening supply chains that will be needed to deliver vaccines even though it's a new area of work for WFP. As follow up to this session there will be two surveys of logistical Common Services for partners – one on cargo and one on passengers. The feedback received will be an input into the continuous improvement of WFP's Common Services.

Social Protection: Building Blocks for a Long-term Vision

Introducing the session, WFP's Social Protection Chief Sarah Laughton said that while social protection had long been a priority, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more urgent to put in place safety nets to protect those at risk. Ingrid van Niekerk, Executive Director, Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), who moderated the session, asked each panellist what added value their approach brought to nationally led social protection systems.

The first panellist, Marta Valdes who is Deputy Humanitarian Director of OXFAM said their first added value is to help hold governments to account to make sure social protection is available to all those who need it. The next is testing, proving and improving systems and bringing back to the table lessons that have been learned. The third is to ensure that the voices of all the participants in the country are heard, which means feedback mechanisms are in place and continually evolving to include those excluded. The fourth is to make sure that systems that already exist

Lewis Temple who is Chief Executive of BRAC UK said that their approach was to build productivity and economic development to find pathways out of poverty using the graduation approach that is tried and tested with a holistic set of interventions. The second added value is to programme to reach and include the poorest and the third is to make sure that all interventions are locally led and context specific.

Hans Bederski, National Director, World Vision International spoke about the situation in Lebanon, a country that suffers from political instability and a protracted economic crisis with over half the country's households living in poverty. This has recently been compounded by the devastating explosion in the port and the COVID-19 pandemic. World Vision's experience brings two added values – the first is a crisis response plan to provide Syrian refugees with social protection and the second is an international poverty targeting plan that is supported by the World Bank and designed to provide stability for the Lebanese population. He noted that key strengths of the partnership with WFP was being able to advocate to bring social protection to scale, building capacity, building trust and bringing accountability, as well as setting national standards, criteria and modalities for the delivery of social protection.

The last panellist, Laura Melo, Representative and Country Director for WFP Guatemala outlined the four areas that she sees as added value. The first is to support existing systems so that they keep going after a sudden shock. The second was connecting the dots and making sure that there is a view of the bigger picture of the national food and nutrition security situation. The third is digitalization and the fourth is nutrition sensitive social protection. She noted the importance of supporting and strengthening government-led social protection systems by bringing together capacity, expertise and knowledge to strengthen programmes across all countries from those in crisis such as Yemen to middle income countries like Guatemala that have huge inequalities and where social protection systems are fragmented.

From the session one of the key recommendations was to work together to make sure all relevant partners, including local NGOs, have "a seat at the table" in social protection dialogues. The follow up actions for the session are to jointly fill knowledge gaps, explore opportunities for joint programming, alignment of tools, and engaging in joint advocacy.

THE PANEL

Social Protection: Building Blocks for a Long-term Vision

Sarah Laughton, Social Protection Chief, WFP
(Moderator)

Lewis Temple, Chief Executive, BRAC UK

Ingrid van Niekerk, Executive Director, Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI)

Marta Valdes, Deputy Humanitarian Director, OXFAM

Hans Bederski, National Director, World Vision International

Laura Melo, Representative and Country Director for WFP Guatemala, WFP

– whether formal or informal – are built on. The final area is reflecting on how social protection be opened up for refugees and those in conflict settings.

Re-opening Schools: Partnering to Ensure a Generation Isn't Left Behind

In her opening, the moderator of this session, Maria Jose Rojas, Head of Partnerships & Advocacy in WFP's School-Based Programmes Division, provided an overview of the enormous impact that COVID-19 has had on school-age children. Over 1.6 billion children were left out of school, which meant missing out not just on education but also on many of the other services that schools – as platforms – provide, such as sanitation and school meals. In some cases, take-home rations and other alternative solutions were found to provide these services during school closures

Edith Heines, and Sean Kerrigan, Country Directors in Rwanda for WFP and World Vision respectively, presented a successful school feeding and health programme.

WFP has been doing school feeding activities in partnership with the Rwandan Government since 2002. In 2016, WFP and World Vision joined forces to bring to Rwandan schools a holistic package of services focused on health and nutrition, which combine school meals with clean water, girl's sanitary rooms, literacy activities, teacher capacity strengthening, and guidance on healthy nutrition and hygiene.

Building this programme around children's needs was very much at the core of its success. Over time, this led to increased educational quality and health outcomes with attendance rates, especially for girls, and literacy rates significantly increased, while health-related absenteeism decreased.

When COVID-19 hit, the programme adapted to provide take-home rations to almost 80,000 children, house-to-house book lending for 25,000 students and awareness on education, hygiene and COVID-19 prevention to 4,000 community members, while at the same time building handwashing stations and connecting schools to water. With the re-opening of schools, the Government promised a new nationwide school feeding programme. In April, WFP initiated a joint coordination mechanism with World Vision, UNICEF and the Rwandan government to design systems and strategies to scale up. Thanks to advocacy around school feeding, 1 million USD will be allocated to provide sanitation structures in over a thousand schools. Also through complementary interventions it was possible to gain efficiencies and ensure that a child receives a full package of support securing their holistic wellbeing.

Following this case study, Chris Castle, UNESCO's Chief of Health and Education, presented the joint advocacy efforts of UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, such as launching a global education coalition platform and a data tool to track school closures and re-openings worldwide. UNESCO has also recently produced a report in partnership with many NGO and UN actors about stepping up effective school health

THE PANEL

Re-opening Schools: Partnering to Ensure a Generation Isn't Left Behind

Maria Jose Rojas, Head of Partnerships & Advocacy of WFP School-Based Programmes, WFP (*Moderator*)

Sean Kerrigan, National Director, World Vision International

Edith Heines, Representative and Country Director, WFP

Chris Castle, Chief - Health and Education, UNESCO

and nutrition, which should serve as reference for the future.

Wrapping up the session, Maria Jose Rojas advocated for more investment in school health and nutrition programming, promoting evidence-based activities and capitalizing on each other's operational experience and strengths. As follow up WFP will map the health and nutrition landscape to find out which organizations are providing what types of interventions to schoolchildren, as well as organizing high level events that we can jointly leverage to elevate our voices in favour of schoolchildren.

Mothers, Masks and MUAC: Ensuring Nutrition Services in the Time of COVID-19

The session aimed to share WFP's nutrition vision with partners and to update each other on current trends, good practices, innovative approaches, and lessons learned, as well as to identify common challenges across regions. Allison Oman Lawi, WFP Director a.i. Nutrition Division and moderator, opened the session by stressing that, while this year brought many challenges, nutrition programming was considered a core area of the COVID-19 humanitarian response as malnutrition doesn't only affect children today, it will affect them in their entire lifetime.

Mesfin Teklu Tessem, Senior Director, Head of Health Unit, International Rescue Committee (IRC), presented the research they recently conducted on community health systems. Across the humanitarian sector and in fragile settings, strengthening community health systems is an essential strategy for expanding access

THE PANEL

Mothers, Masks and MUAC: Ensuring Nutrition Services in the Time of COVID-19

Allison Oman Lawi, Director a.i. Nutrition Division, WFP
(Moderator)

Mesfin Teklu Tessema, Senior Director, Head of Health Unit, International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Habtamu Fekadu, Senior Director of Nutrition, Save the Children

to lifesaving services – especially in places where the formal health system is too weak and scattered to meet the demand for care. Evidence from IRC's health programmes suggest that community health workers are best placed to deliver essential health services in this context – particularly for delivering the treatments needed to address the high burden of malnutrition and under-five mortality which plagues crisis affected communities

He noted that community-based approaches will be tested to build the evidence base and ultimately increase access to care for the millions of malnourished children suffering without treatment. The increase of hunger in countries like Yemen, Somalia and South Sudan during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the need to scale these approaches in order to bring care closer to home maintaining access to essential services while reducing the risk of exposure to the virus.

Habtamu Fekadu, Senior Director of Nutrition, Save the Children presented some of the challenges faced this year and how they overcame them by adapting their nutrition programming to the pandemic situation. Save the Children's global COVID-19 response plan was based on two pillars: mitigation of the pandemic on child mortality and keeping children and their community safe during the pandemic. Save the Children conducted a survey in 20 countries in 2020 that informed their programming adaptation. The COVID-19 Nutrition Response Framework is based on maintaining health and nutrition services and promoting and supporting child feeding and livelihood support for communities. Empowering communities in diagnosing and treating malnutrition and supporting breastfeeding and maternal diets were also key components. When many of Save the Children staff could not reach and support the community workers due to travel restrictions, a toolkit to support capacity at local level was developed.

Bringing the examples of Kenya and Bangladesh, Habtamu Fekadu explained some of the adaptations that were set up this year such as supporting local

governments in preparing action plans and resource mobilization strategies, facilitating data collection for decision making for social protection, training women on using MUAC to diagnose malnutrition, and dedicated, safe delivery areas for pregnant women with COVID-19

One of the highlights of the session was hearing the voices by video from many national NGOs on the frontline of the nutrition response who had found ways to keep their programmes going while keeping themselves and the communities they serve safe. Many common areas of interest were highlighted including how to address maternal nutrition and community-based programmes that are currently underdeveloped.

Resilient Food Systems: Towards the 2021 Food Systems Summit

The Food System Summit 2021 is an opportunity to broaden our understanding and agree on how we can change food systems in a way that will make them more sustainable, equitable, inclusive and resilient for all, especially for the most vulnerable. The session was moderated by Stephanie Hochstetter, WFP's Director for the Rome-based Agencies and the Committee on World Food Security, opened by underlining that the session was focussing on Action Track 5 of the Food Systems Summit which is Building Resilience to Vulnerability, Shocks and Stress, for which WFP is the Anchor Organization.

The keynote was delivered by Martin Frick, Deputy of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Summit. He stated that, as we enter the last decade of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is understood that food systems are essential for development, poverty eradication and all equity issues in the SDG Agenda as well as being vital for the wellbeing of the planet. The Secretary General had given guidance that Summit should be a people's and a solutions Summit. As well as a Summit moment on the margins of the General Assembly, it is also a one-year process to get input from all over the world making sure all voices are heard. He highlighted that we need to change the way people speak about food and refer to it as a whole system and not only about farmers or smallholders but also about consumption patterns. The Summit wants to present solutions and to give visibility to those who are working on sustainable transformation.

the Summit's Advisory Committee led by Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy UN Secretary General, is a multi-stakeholder body that includes producer associations and indigenous groups alongside country representatives. The Scientific Group will ensure proceedings are based on knowledge and science which includes indigenous and producer knowledge. There will be country level dialogues in every UN Member Country about what food systems look like, who their stakeholders and where changes are needed. The next stage will be to roll out the dialogues to field level and the third is to drill down to action plans and initiatives that will trigger needed change. Governments are urged to include civil society as much as possible in the country level dialogues, which are truly open to everyone.

The Action tracks can be thought of as a global thinking machine – they are (1) ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all, (2) shifting to sustainable consumption patterns, (3) boosting nature-positive production at scale, (4) advancing equitable livelihoods and (5) building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress, which cuts across the other tracks. Again, each action track includes the participation of civil society, the food industry and others to ensure the multi-stakeholder nature of the whole Summit.

Action Track 5 is Chaired by Saleemul Huq, Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) in Bangladesh. WFP is the Track's Anchor Organization on account of its

David Kaatrud, WFP's Global Director of Programme and Policy, focussed on what Action Track 5 will address and how partners can shape its outcome. He explained that the role of the Anchor Organization is to support the Chair to bring knowledge and organize the discussions. Regarding Track 5, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought an awareness of the importance of food systems to us all and brings an opportunity to look at ways to improve them in terms of innovative approaches and leaving no one behind. It has strong links with the other Action Tracks and will work closely with them.

The Chair and Vice Chair of Action Track 5 have a strong background in climate change and the Youth Vice Chair brings nutrition expertise. WFP's added value is its work to build resilient food systems, including in conflict settings. We all know that risks do not work in isolation and the challenges aggravate each other making the contexts in which we operate more complex than ever. WFP brings a risk management approach from its work in conflicts to the food systems perspective. The first pre-summit meeting will take place next summer in Rome, which means time is short. WFP is committed to putting in a strong effort to make sure we get the most out of Action Track 5. The Summit itself can be viewed as the start of a process that will continue well beyond 2030.

The last panellist was Nivedita Varshneya, Country Director for India & Bangladesh in Welthungerhilfe. She brought a country level perspective to the discussion. She started with an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on food systems. She said that it had shown how food systems were both intertwined and fractured. Agriculture was impacted by labour shortages and lack of transport as well as access to markets both for consumers and farmers. The government responded with cash transfers and safety nets but the poor, and especially the urban poor, suffered the most with studies showing that 50% of households reduced the number of meals.

As for solutions she stressed that we need to build back better by looking at policies that currently favour rice and wheat to increase the diversification of food crops. We need to develop circular economy models that include recycling and reduce the dependency on external inputs. Public investment in agriculture is also critical as food systems need to improve infrastructure. Universal basic income is also important.

Regarding solutions, the local procurement of cereals and other nutritious foods by government food programmes helps enhance livelihoods. We also need consumer behaviour change so that healthy foods

THE PANEL

Resilient Food Systems: Towards the 2021 Food Systems Summit

Stephanie Hochstetter, Director of the UN World Food Programme for the Rome-based Agencies and the Committee on World Food Security, WFP (*Moderator*)

Martin Frick, Deputy of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Food System Summit 2021, UN Food Systems Summit 2021 (*Keynote*)

David Kaatrud, Global Director of Programme and Policy, WFP

Nivedita Varshneya, Country Director India & Bangladesh, Welthungerhilfe

strong expertise in resilience building. Partners can participate by bringing their voices to the debate. At the moment the focus is on best practices and challenges, with the aim to understand what the current situation is. Results will be clustered on thematic lines and will be used to make a catalogue for building more resilient and inclusive food systems.

are favoured. Another solution is gender sensitive programming that ensures the inclusion of women in food systems through policies that give them ownership of land and other resources. She stressed that multi-stakeholder synergies are critical as health, agriculture, nutrition and resources are all connected and that we need to drop any siloed approach and foster collaboration.

Stephanie closed the session encouraging all partners to engage in the Summit – whether in Action Track 5 or another Action Track – as it was important to make sure all voices were heard. As follow up to this session, WFP will facilitate the participation of its [NGO partners in the Summit processes](#).

Field Security: from dialogue to action in the new normal

Official UN-NGO lective security threats and the importance of working together to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian and development assistance. This session, moderated by Maria Victoria Montalvo Siles, Director of WFP's Security Division, was designed with the intention of finding ways to further enhance collaboration with NGO partners, in particular local NGOs.

The first panellist, Patrick Mergey, Senior Regional Security Officer for WFP, presented a case study on the approach taken with small local NGOs in Somalia and the challenges they face. Every local NGO that is not part of the SLT framework, sees risks differently. They set their own standards according to their own ability. To support their efforts, a handbook has been developed specifically to guide the last mile of operations in both conflict and non-conflict situations. WFP also provided a safe distribution checklist to ensure that there was consistency across operations. Support was also made available to smaller NGOs

Field Security: from dialogue to action in the new normal

Maria Victoria Montalvo Siles, Director of Security Division, WFP (*Moderator*)

Nicolas Morin, Chief Policy and Enabling Services, WFP

Patrick Mergey, Senior Regional Security Officer, WFP

Chris Williams, Director of Security, CARE USA

to translate their duty of care obligations into key processes and actions that enhance their staff security

also improving their reputation and credibility with regards to implementing risk management systems.

Chris Williams who is Director of Security for CARE USA based in Bangkok emphasised the importance of including the safety and security of teams and approaches to risk during programme design. Often this can either come too early or too late, so it is important to have the right conversation at the right time especially with regards to the budget. Larger risk frameworks also need to be compatible with the situation on the ground and this approach also gives the chance for innovation. Supporting smaller NGOs who have limited capacity and funding can be perceived as a barrier, but security risk management does not necessarily need large budgets. By using the checklist approach, variables can be factored in from the outset. Also, donors are now perceiving that staff security is an integral part of programming. Another point is that sometimes there can be a competitive approach and security costs are hidden while investing in safety and security especially in conflict areas should be clear and upfront.

Nicolas Morin, Chief Policy and Enabling Services for WFP highlighted the fact that there is a lack of a common approach. It can sometimes be difficult to know who to speak to when engaging with the NGO community, in particular on the last mile. Informal networks allowed people to speak more openly and get a greater sense of what is going on rather than what is said in formal reports. WFP is bound by the Saving Lives Together Network and it is in nobody's interest to develop something formal outside of it. What is needed is a pathway that allows front line collaboration connecting the dots of what is going on at a regional and sub regional level. WFP can use its influence to promote a collaborative approach bringing a rich and deeper level of information that can broaden the perspective as well as advocating for safety and security with and on behalf of the humanitarian community. Specific guidance for FLA users in the field on security aspects was a top priority as it is clearly needed and often explicitly requested. The WFP Security team will be following up on these needs.

Duty of Care and Localization: From Standards to Implementation

Protecting beneficiaries and humanitarian workers has long been a priority and the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the increased reliance on local and national partners to continue delivering. National aid workers constitute the majority of staff on the ground covering the bulk of the work done: their safety,

security and health is a top priority both now and in the future. This session was focussed on the IASC Draft Minimum Standards of the Duty of Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic which were being developed.

The session was opened by the moderator, Mirela Shuteriqi Director of Policy, ICVA. She introduced

THE PANEL

Duty of Care and Localization: From Standards to Implementation

Mirela Shuteriqi, Director of Policy, ICVA (*Moderator*)

Azmat Khan, Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Rural Development (FRD) Pakistan

Brian Bogart, Senior Regional Programme Advisor in the WFP Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, WFP

Anna Suzanna Hidayat, Humanitarian Team Leader, CARE

a video case-study sent by the WFP Burkina Faso Country Office that described how some local partners had been able to provide measures of care for their staff and beneficiaries during the COVID-19 pandemic. The video can be seen at this link:

Prior to the session, a call for questions had been sent out. The questions received have used as a basis for the session's discussions.

The first panellist, Anna Suzanna Hidayat, Humanitarian Team Leader, CARE Nigeria, was asked what measures her organization had taken to assess the risks to mental and physical health since the onset of the pandemic. She explained that, as Nigeria was already in a protracted humanitarian crisis before COVID-19, they already had significant measures in place. Staff are regularly surveyed and questions on the impact of COVID-19 were added to the survey. Training for stress management in the workplace was made available as was mental and physical health support. Many were worried to go to hospital if sick and so online doctors were made available who could issue a prescription to be picked up at a local pharmacy.

Awareness of COVID-19 transmission risks was raised and each office was asked to prepare a contingency plan. For those who were not online, this support was made available through WhatsApp or SMS messaging. PPE was made available in the early stages of the pandemic and information was shared with staff on the situation in each location through regular meetings. Life balance was important and staff rotations were made to allow people to take leave.

Regarding adjustments that had been made to their recruiting strategy in response to the pandemic, she said that as some areas are high risk, such as North East Nigeria, they were recruiting more locally.

Brian Bogart, Senior Regional Programme Advisor in the WFP Regional Bureau for Southern Africa was asked if he thought partners understood and had the capacity to fulfil their obligations as to duty of care and if duty of care was part of WFP's due diligence criteria for partners. Brian first noted that we have a moral obligation to one another, starting with the people we serve, who we must protect and keep safe. To do that we need to ensure that all of our staff are protected whether they are international, national or local.

Regarding due diligence criteria, WFP usually evaluates the expertise and technical capacity of partners. On the other hand, duty of care is becoming more and more important due to the security aspects of many of the areas of operation. This has been further highlighted by the pandemic both from the aspect of the safety of staff but also to make sure that they themselves don't become spreading agents. Science and understanding have evolved since the onset of the pandemic and WFP has been continually adapting and adjusting operations including considerations as to whether partners can work effectively and protect the affected populations. In high-risk contexts, WFP has tried to reduce the number of people on the ground further extending support on the front line to partners with less capacity by supplying, for example, technology for remote monitoring. WFP is also trying to extend support to partners on the front line, particularly those with less capacity, to absorb additional costs related to COVID-19 and also trying to act as a conduit for information.

From March through May, many of WFP's country offices were trying to make sense of what to do in the context of the pandemic and information was critical. Additional medical staff in country offices provided access to clinics and in some cases medical evacuation. Some funding windows were increased so that partners could buy their own PPE and in some cases WFP procured and delivered it to the country level to ensure staff working on our programmes had equal access to equipment. He stressed that we are in this together and we will succeed or fail together.

Regarding possible solutions, he noted that none of us had planned for the extra costs COVID-19 had brought which not only included PPE but other adjustments such as increased distribution costs in order to avoid overcrowding. Existing budgets were adapted and, in some cases, extra costs were absorbed where no

other funding was available. He pointed out that duty of care should not come at the cost of the assistance we provide: we need to be as efficient as possible while ensuring keeping staff on the front line safe.

The third panellist, Azmat Khan who is Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation for Rural Development (FRD), Pakistan was asked what the reaction to the Draft Minimum Standards is from local and national actors' perspective. He said that local actors welcomed the Standards as a good starting point to improve the quality of life. They should be directed at all humanitarian workers wherever they are. While they are focussed on the COVID-19 pandemic local actors are looking forward to them being mainstreamed. Local actors are also ready to contribute to meeting them which would make their work environment safer and more dignified.

He saw two opportunities for local actors emerging from the Standards, the first being a cultural transformation in the humanitarian sector as a whole and the second in the ownership of how resources are channelled to meet the Standards' obligations. At the same time, he saw three challenges, the first being that duty of care was resource intensive. The second was that although there maybe buy-in at HQ levels for the standards, he wondered if this had trickled down to country and field offices. The third challenge is that currently duty of care standards are not considered part of the deliverables and a change in mindset is needed to include targets on the well-being of staff.

He noted that whether international, national or local, we are all part of the same eco-system, are not competitors, and can strengthen each other's efforts. For example, small organizations cannot raise funds from their own communities, so they rely heavily on international organizations. There is a need to make sure donors understand that local NGOs need more investment to meet the Standards.

He ended with three recommendations. The first was that all staff members, no matter their level, should be treated equally. The second was that donors should be prepared to fund duty of care for those who are actually implementing projects and the third that the voice of local actors is heard. A strategy is needed to jointly advocate for equality across the sector.

Since APC 202 the IASC Draft Minimum Standards of the Duty of Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic have been adopted.

Harmonizing NGO Partnerships as the UN

This session looked at the ongoing formal and informal work between UN agencies focusing on how to better align partnership management activities. This

work builds on the momentum brought by the launch of the UN Partner Portal in November 2018.

The session was moderated by Robert Hurt, UNHCR's Head Implementation Management and Assurance Service, UNHCR.

The first panellist, Nicole Kim, Programme Specialist, Policy & Strategy Division, UNFPA, gave an overview of UNFPA's experiences with the Portal. The Portal is driving inter agency harmonization and as more agencies join, more ways to harmonize will be found so that partners will have the same experience. One area she highlighted as successful was the roll out of the PSEA common assessment tool.

She stressed that informal conversations were also an important factor as they gave the opportunity to discuss practical approaches and find synergies. She highlighted three challenges. The first was that each agency has its own rules, regulations, policies and procedures, something that may need to change in order to find a fully harmonized approach. The second was that there can be restrictions imposed by donors, again something that needs to be looked at. The third is the different risk appetite that each agency has, with UNFPA typically being more risk averse compared

THE PANEL

Harmonizing NGO Partnerships as the UN

Robert Hurt, Head Implementation Management and Assurance Service, UNHCR (*Moderator*)

Frankie Chen, Programme Manager - Civil Society Implementing Partnerships, UNICEF

Elizabeth Kelley, Donor Engagement Advisor, Institutional Donor Engagement and Advancement (IDEA) Department, Catholic Relief Services

Nicole Kim, Programme Specialist, Policy & Strategy Division, UNFPA

Ellen Wielezynski, NGO Unit Global Technical Advisor, WFP

to other agencies. She noted that the pandemic had accelerated this work as everyone was forced to find practical ways to adapt and harmonize.

Frankie Chen, UNICEF's Programme Manager for Civil Society Implementing Partnerships, explained that UNICEF has 4,000 civil society partners ranging from national to international, academic and community based and while they have been critical in UNICEF's results, they are also important partners for other UN agencies. Regarding due diligence, UNICEF verifies that the partner is registered as a not for profit with their government, that their values are in line with those of the UN, have a shared commitment to human rights, and they present no risk or harm to their communities. This due diligence has been onerous

for some partners who had to do it multiple times for different agencies. Being able to share the results of due diligence through the UN Partner Portal has lightened their burden. He highlighted that there is a need for behaviour change in the agencies who tend to have risk averse cultures and want their own due diligence but the Portal, as a shared platform, is changing that. Having more partners in the Portal will further ease the burden and there is currently the target under the Grand Bargain to increase the number to seven by mid-2020.

Other areas to harmonize are to expand due diligence to include PSEA and financial management. Currently under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), UNICEF honours the assessments of UNDP and UNFPA and hopes to extend this to other agencies in the future. He too noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had shown how important it is to leverage the work of others and increase harmonization.

Ellen Wielezyski, WFP's NGO Unit Global Technical Advisor, spoke about what the Portal approach means for UN colleagues and partners on the ground and how they benefit from it. She started by highlighting that working collaboratively and collectively, such as through the Portal, meant it was possible to identify at an early stage where there is a need for meaningful capacity strengthening. Even though each agency has different frameworks and controls, it is often possible to find common denominators to deliver better programmes. She said it was important to hear from NGO partners on what their vision for harmonization is, including on mutual recognition and meaningful collaboration. There has been a lot of momentum within WFP since it joined the Portal and the NGO Unit provides support to many regional and country offices. There have been many successes including in South Sudan and DRC where joint calls, joint programming and joint assessments can often translate into capacity strengthening both of UN field staff as well as partner staff.

Regarding the PSEA assessment tool, credit must be given to the WFP Ethics Division and their counterparts in other agencies who developed it. It helps find out where there are capacity gaps. We can then collectively work towards filling them, something that is particularly important for smaller organizations.

Elizabeth Kelley, Donor Engagement Advisor, Institutional Donor Engagement and Advancement (IDEA) Department, Catholic Relief Services, opened by noting that she is also Chair of the Interaction-WFP Working Group on Partnerships. She said that she appreciated the efforts being made to move to more meaningful participation of NGOs in UN fora as we share the same objectives of delivering more effectively and efficiently. Simplifying and harmonizing

were two ways to do that. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a good opportunity to work together to find creative ways to keep each other informed, share information, and look at flexible ways to adjust requirements in response to the situation.

Building on the progress already made, she noted the importance of harmonizing budget lines and cost categories. Moving forward, there are specific areas where more progress would be welcome, the first being for the Portal to include more agencies and to alleviate some of the administration work perhaps through automatic updates on progress with FLAs and other agreements. User friendliness is important particularly for national NGOs. Another area is harmonizing reporting.

She pointed out that coverage of shared costs varies from country to country and agency to agency. There is inconsistent application of costs lines, which can require a lot of discussion. Some of this could be resolved by the Money Where It Counts protocol, which seeks to simplify and harmonize costing and reporting. This was launched at the beginning of the year, but it's important that it doesn't lose momentum. While it's recognized that different UN agencies have different requirements, there are still time-saving opportunities. Another initiative is the 8 plus 3 reporting template that allows for simplified reporting. If UN agencies could align with that it would ease some of the burden. She ended by saying that we were moving in the right direction with regards to open, clear and risk informed partnerships noting also that, as we all work with many of the same donors and know their requirements, we can work together to meet them.

One outcome of the session was the importance of continued dialogue between UN agencies and partners including in next planning vision meeting for the UN Partner Portal.

Working Together Better: Field Level Agreements

This session, moderated by Bettina Luescher, WFP's Chief Spokesperson in Berlin, launched the start of WFP's dialogue with NGO partners on the revision of the Field Level Agreement (FLA).

The first panellist, Cordelia Salter, Senior NGO Partnerships Officer, WFP, started with an overview of the current FLA template, which had grown incrementally over the years with feedback received from NGO partners and WFP colleagues at HQ and country level. It was, therefore, no longer user friendly and difficult to manage. She then presented proposed changes to the format designed to make it more user friendly, the first being to move away from numbered

THE PANEL

Working Together Better: Field Level Agreements

Bettina Luescher, WFP Chief Spokesperson - Berlin Office, WFP (*Moderator*)

Cordelia Salter, NGO Partnerships Officer - FLA review, WFP

Haroon Kash, Head of Programme Funding and Partnerships, Islamic Relief Worldwide

Giammichele De Maio, Chief, NGO Partnerships Unit, WFP

Waza Dzoole, Programme Associate, Emergency Unit, WFP

annexes to annexes with meaningful names. The second is to concentrate the added data specific to each FLA, e.g. the operational plan and budget, that is spread throughout the current FLA in one Word file leaving the actual clauses in PDF format. This would result in all FLA data in one much shorter file making it easier to transmit. This format update is also an important step towards the eventual digitization of the FLA.

Another change is to make sure that guidance for FLA users is not only available on the WFP intranet, but also in the public domain and in the UN Partner Portal, both of which can be accessed by partner. It will make it easier for partners to see the policies and directives referenced in the FLA as well as any associated tools or learning material.

As well as format changes, there is the need to continually update the FLA as new directives and policies are adopted by the WFP Executive Board. Before introducing any new clauses in the FLA, NGO partners will be consulted so they are aware of new obligations. After the current backlog of directives is cleared, there will be an annual review window. In the shorter term the plan is for the new format to go live in January 2021, but the existing format will remain available until June 2021.

Giammichele De Maio, Chief of WFP's NGO Partnerships Unit, went on to stress that these changes in the FLA were the start of a conversation and to let partners know that within WFP an internal process is underway to review the FLA based on demands from the field. Colleagues across WFP are involved such as finance, reporting, ethics, programming and legal and, as we go ahead, we believe we hope to also address some of the bottle necks that were mentioned in the Harmonizing NGO Partnerships as the UN session. WFP's focus is on helping our colleagues in the field while working

towards end to end digitization which will bring major efficiencies and clarify the way we do business.

WFP wants to hear from partners on how we can move together in a way that is comfortable for everyone. WFP had hoped to present the new Data Protection clauses today, but they are still going through review. Partners will be consulted on this important addition as soon as it is cleared internally. He stressed that this is the start of dialogue and that our beneficiaries are our ultimate clients and we know that we need to adapt to the changes that come, and we have seen plenty in these last months.

Haroon Kash, Head of Programme Funding and Partnerships for Islamic Relief Worldwide welcomed the proposed changes and the planned participatory process. While many of the terms and conditions are set by external factors, engaging partners is always welcome and brings with it a sense of collaboration. Partnerships thrive on mutual understanding and proactively engaging stakeholders in the process is appreciated and while we may not agree on every issue, NGOs are always ready to engage. He noted how different our world is now, which has brought new dynamics to the way we work. In some ways COVID-19 has been an enabler and shows how things can be done. While we do still need to control certain aspects, getting input from different areas has opened up the process to better meet the needs of stakeholders.

Waza Dzoole, Programme Associate in the WFP Malawi Country Office, represented the needs of FLA users in the field who support partners when drawing up FLAs. She confirmed that the current format of the FLA can be confusing and that in the past new clauses have been added suddenly which was difficult for everyone. Having consultations before adding new clauses will allow FLA users to highlight their importance and what adjustments need to be made. She appreciated that the file would be shorter and that all the important information would be in one place making it easier to manage.

Another important improvement was that there would be guidance easily available for partners, which will avoid FLA users spending a lot of time explaining clauses.

The session was the start of a change management campaign to inform all FLA users – both those working for WFP and for NGOs - of the upcoming changes and prepare them. Also, it was part of an ongoing consultative process between all FLA stakeholders to make sure that the FLA template stays up to date.

The new FLA Template and layout of the guidance will be available from January 2021. FLA users will be consulted to give their feedback on how it's working.

Strategic Opportunities

The session, moderated by Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Department, discussed some of the opportunities that arise for WFP to collaborate even more closely with NGO partners both in the next WFP Strategic Plan and in light of the advocacy opportunities brought by the Nobel Peace Prize.

In his keynote, Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), applauded WFP for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for its work on linking food security and peace. WFP does not only represent a large player in the humanitarian sector, but it also offers a platform for partners such as through common services. Jan suggested WFP leverage the momentum gained from being awarded this very prestigious prize to scale up its conflict analysis capabilities - understanding its actors, causes, and funding sources - and stepping up advocacy for defending the humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence.

THE PANEL

Strategic Opportunities

Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, WFP (*Moderator*)

Jan Egeland, Secretary General, Norwegian Refugee Council (*Keynote*)

Arif Husain, Chief Economist & Director at WFP, WFP

Arif Husain, WFP Chief Economist, stated that, studying the economic history of countries that recovered from major conflicts such as World War Two or the Korean War to become wealthy, powerful nations, there are five actions that need to be taken to improve the economic and social conditions of post-war countries. The first is to empower women as without women in the workforce, it is difficult to get out of hunger and poverty. The second is investing in child nutrition, because if a child is not properly nourished in their first 1000 days of life, they will never recover to be productive, active members of society. Third is to invest in youth vocational training. By 2030, 500 million young people will be entering the workforce, while the progress in automation will make more and more labour-intensive jobs irrelevant. The fourth is building infrastructure. For example, many young people leave rural areas because of the lack of opportunities. If you bring electricity, Internet and roads, you bring new opportunities to those areas

as farmers will be connected to markets. The last action is social protection by bringing in the private and public sectors to allow people to have purchasing power. These five actions will not stand on their own without the right enabling conditions which are political will, commitment to good governance, and peace.

Arif also stressed the cost of inaction - the political and economic cost of not doing anything. He used the example of the billions of dollars spent in the US to keep migrants out while a fraction of that cost could have been invested in improving livelihoods in the countries they are leaving.

Looking forward, WFP will still be about saving lives, but there is also an imperative to change lives and to show the world that there will be a huge cost if we do not act. This is a big task and no single entity can do it alone. This is where we need partnership, to leverage our competitive advantages to get to Zero Hunger.

Open Feedback

The session provided the opportunity to address some of the key and long-standing questions that partners had on partnering with WFP and the way forward. The WFP NGO unit and the session's moderator, Kate Phillips Barrasso, Director of Humanitarian Policy at Interaction, jointly selected the questions from questions collected from a series of written inputs and an open feedback form that had been active throughout the APC. Answering a question on WFP strategic vision for partnerships in the long term, Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Department, stressed that NGOs are key partners in operations across WFP's multifaceted mandate to both save and change lives. Going forward, there is an opportunity to create an even greater sense of ownership in partnerships which not only means co-designing programmes, but also strengthening our joint monitoring and reporting capabilities.

This was followed by a question on how, during the pandemic, WFP had adjusted budget related guidance and simplified processes to allow for greater flexibility for partners. Giammichele De Maio, Head of WFP's NGO Unit stated that WFP issued guidance to country offices very early in the COVID-19 emergency. It requested to allow for process simplification, as well as greater levels of budget flexibility in their own context which had been preceded by continuous conversations with WFP country offices and partners. Given how decentralized WFP is, a bottom-up approach was deemed the best to allow for better programming adaptations and ultimately more flexibility.

Ross Smith, WFP Senior Programme Advisor, East Africa Region, spoke about the regional experience in working together with partners for an effective COVID-19 response. Early dialogue with over 250 partners in the region was a key component to support them during the pandemic and to adapt programmes. For example, WFP and partners looked together at how to change the way distributions are managed and their frequency to keep beneficiaries and staff safe while keeping operations running. Ross Smith stressed that partnering with NGOs specialized in data collection, analysis and/or advocacy will be key to future collaborations.

Addressing the importance of local partners in the COVID-19 response, Valerie stressed that the issue of empowering local actors has long been a priority for WFP. WFP works with hundreds of local NGO partners, which are at the core of its work in 83 countries. Going forward, WFP plans to use a twin-track approach to

to diversify and adapt the way we partner. This can mean modifying processes and agreements, costing elements, and guidance for field teams to allow for more value for money and ultimately better programme quality. An example of a successful collaboration has been with UNICEF, a long-standing WFP partner, where discussions on how to leverage each other strengths led to stronger collaboration and programme quality.

Addressing the last question on the steps that WFP is taking to ensure that its digital systems are safe, secure, accountable and transparent for beneficiaries and partners, Giammichele emphasised that this an area of major investment for WFP. There has been very strong collaboration with international partners to continuously improve standards and the personal data protection policy at all levels - country, regional and global. A new annex of the [FLA on data protection](#) is scheduled to be rolled out soon.

THE PANEL

Open Feedback

Kate Phillips Barrasso, Director of Humanitarian Policy, Interaction (*Moderator*)

Allison Oman Lawi, Director a.i. Nutrition Division, WFP

Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, WFP

Ross Smith, Senior Regional Programme Advisor, East Africa region, WFP

Giammichele De Maio, Chief, NGO Partnerships Unit, WFP

systematically build the capacity of grassroots civil society organizations and at the same time invest in national capacity strengthening initiatives working with national and local governments to leverage all opportunities at local levels to save lives and change lives.

Allison Oman, WFP Director of Nutrition a.i., answered a question on complementary partnerships in nutrition programming. She explained that the demands on partners have increased recently as complexity in nutrition programming expanded. She recommended that WFP and its partners have deeper discussions on each other's competitive advantages

Wrap up and Steps Before We Next Meet

Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Department, and Justin Byworth, World Vision International's Global Humanitarian Director, wrapped up APC 2020 giving their personal highlights and takeaways of each of the sessions. Valerie thanked partners for their engagement stressing how APC provided an opportunity to identify opportunities to working together more closely and to deliver more and better on behalf of those we serve.

Missed the sessions live?



All videos are available on the APC website at apc2020.sched.com

For follow-up to any of the issues discussed during APC 2020, to share additional ideas or any other query, please contact wfp.ngounit@wfp.org.

NGO Partnership Unit

wfp.ngounit@wfp.org

World Food Programme,
Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68,
00148 Rome, Italy