Gender equality and women’s empowerment are fundamental human rights issues and cornerstones of inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. The United Nations – including WFP – is founded on the basis of upholding the internationally-agreed human rights that apply to all women, men, girls and boys without distinction. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

The underlying reason why gender equality matters to WFP is because – as stated at the very beginning of the Gender Policy (2015-2020) – “WFP’s ability to achieve its Strategic Objectives depends on its capacity to deliver food assistance that addresses the different needs and priorities of the women, men, girls and boys whom it serves. A world with zero hunger can be achieved only when everyone has equal opportunities, equal access to resources, and equal voice in the decisions that shape their households, communities and societies”.

In order to end hunger, save lives and ensure food security and nutrition for all persons, gender equality and women’s empowerment are at the core of WFP’s work.

This means that WFP’s work should be gender-transformative. All of our interventions should contribute to the food and nutrition security of all persons without distinction and this requires shifting situations and relations of inequality to ones of equality.

WFP recognised the importance of, and officially committed to, “the gender-transformative approach to food assistance programme and policies” and to “working for gender-transformative results with its beneficiaries” in the Gender Policy (2015-2020). Whether a programme involves mainstreaming gender or targeting gender equality, it must address the strategic interests of women and men (or girls and boys as applicable), not solely their practical needs.

Gender refers to the range of characteristics that a society defines as being masculine or feminine. Gender describes the state of being a woman, man, girl or boy in a particular culture, at a particular point in time. Gender is connected to roles, behaviours, opportunities, the exercise of human rights, power, the valuing of contributions of women and men, and both access to and control of resources.

It is important to keep in mind that gender overlaps – or intersects – with other social identities and forms of discrimination, dis/advantage and in/exclusion, such as sexuality, colour, dis/ability, ethnicity and economic status.

Gender equality refers to the equal exercise by women and men, girls and boys, of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that women and men, girls and boys, are the same; but that their exercise of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed, or limited, by whether they were born female or male. Rights, responsibilities, opportunities and the command of power are not dependent upon being female or male.

For WFP, promoting gender equality means assigning equal value to women and men (and girls and boys) and addressing their particular needs, interests, vulnerabilities and capacities, so as to realize food security and nutrition for all persons.
## Gender Concepts

| **Patriarchy** | (Rule of the father) A system (community, society, government etc.) where women (and girls) are subordinate to (or dominated by) men (and boys) in terms of power, status and rights. |
| **Gender Transformation** | Substantial changes in gender relations towards equality between women and men (and girls and boys). |
| **Gender Equity** | Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men, girls and boys. Gender equity refers to situations or acts in which women and men, girls and boys, are treated fairly, acknowledging that treatment may be different so as to meet specific needs and interests that contribute to reducing inequalities. Equity leads to equality. |
| **Gender Mainstreaming** | Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for achieving gender equality. Gender mainstreaming “is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” ([ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, 1997/2](https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/1997/673096ecosoc_agreed_conclusions_en.pdf)) |
| **Gender Analysis** | A gender analysis is an examination and interpretation of quantitative data and qualitative information about people from a gender perspective. Gender analysis is a tool for documenting and understanding the lives of women and men, girls and boys; for example, their circumstances, needs, interests, roles, responsibilities, relations, activities, opportunities, vulnerabilities, capacities, participation, power, command of resources and exercise of human rights. |
| **Data Disaggregation** | Quantitative data (numbers, percentages, proportions, ratios) and qualitative information (preferences, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, values, scope etc.) about people can be disaggregated by sex and age. This means that data and information related to adults and children can be, and should be, separated, analysed and presented for women, men, girls and boys; across different age groups. |
| **Gender Parity** | Gender parity (or “balance”) refers to equal numbers of women and men, or of girls and boys, in a particular setting, situation, forum, body etc., for example, in a school, in a workplace, on a committee, in a parliament. |
| **Empowerment** | Empowerment refers to the process of building capacities through which an individual can make choices and take decisions about his or her own life. Empowerment is related to self-determination. It is a term than can also be applied to groups. The “power” in “empowerment” refers to “power to...”, “power with...” and “power from within”; it does not mean “power over...” |
| **Women’s Empowerment** | Women’s empowerment refers to the process through which women obtain and exercise agency in their own lives, with equal access alongside men to resources, opportunities and power. Women’s empowerment involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expanding choices, increasing access to and control of resources and reforming institutions and structures so that they contribute to gender equality, rather than perpetuate discrimination and oppression. |
| **Agency** | Agency refers to the capacity of an individual, or a group, to make choices and to act on the choices made. |
### Practical Needs
Practical needs are material needs related to survival; what must exist in order for a person to live a decent life. Examples include potable water, food, shelter and income. Practical needs are typically of an immediate or short-term nature that can be addressed through the provision of goods or services, such as cash, vouchers and food.

### Strategic Interests
Strategic interests are related to the position that a person occupies within his or her society. Strategic interests are typically of long-standing duration because they relate to roles, power and control. Examples include access to health services including reproductive health, higher education, ending domestic violence, equal wages, the ability to inherit property and control of one’s own body.

### Gender Roles
Gender roles refer to the behaviours, tasks and responsibilities that are assigned to, and considered socially acceptable for, women (and girls) and men (and boys), based on socio-culturally determined concepts of femininity and masculinity.

### Gender Division of Labour
The gender division of labour refers to the allocation of certain tasks / work / functions to women and to men according to what is considered acceptable for women and for men (based on understandings of masculinity, femininity, gender etc.). As well as prescribing acceptable labour for women and men, the gender division of labour prohibits, or restricts, women and men from performing certain tasks (jobs, roles etc.).

### Equality of Opportunity
Equality of opportunity is where both women and men, and girls and boys, are able to take advantage of opportunities to undertake something that is of interest or value to them.

### Equality of Outcome
Equality of outcome is where women and men, and girls and boys, benefit from an intervention; that is, a policy, programme or project benefits women and men in an equitable manner. Equality of outcome is considerate of the fact that equality of opportunity may not exist; which means that interventions are tailored to the specific circumstances, needs and interests of women, men, girls and boys to get to equality of outcome.

### Gender Exploitive
An intervention – policy, programme, project, service etc. – reinforces, perpetuates and exacerbates gender inequalities, discriminatory gender stereotypes and oppressive gender roles.

### Gender Blind
The failure to recognise the influence of gender, resulting in an intervention – policy, programme, project, service etc. – that perpetuates inequalities, potentially causing harm and delivering temporary, rather than sustainable, changes.

### Gender Sensitive
Used to describe an intervention – policy, programme, project etc. – that considers and aims to address the specific needs, interests, capacities and contexts for women, men, girls and boys, but does not address gender relations and the need to address the distribution of power between women and men, and girls and boys, for sustainable outcomes.

### Gender Transformative
An initiative (law, policy, programme, project etc.) that changes gender relations in favour of the equal sharing of power by women and men, and girls and boys. The action involves revising the socio-cultural, political and economic structures and norms that underpin inequalities.

### Gender Marker
A corporate monitoring tool for tracking the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment in WFP initiatives, including design, implementation and results.
### Stakeholder
A stakeholder is any person, group or institution that has an interest in, or can influence, a WFP intervention (policy, programme, project, service etc.).

### Stakeholder Analysis
Stakeholder analysis is the systematic identification and analysis of different individuals and groups who have an interest in, can influence and/or can be impacted by a WFP intervention – positively or negatively. Gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis consciously examines commitments, capacities and efforts of the different women and men (and girls and boys), as well as organisations, in mainstreaming gender and advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment.

### Partnerships
“Collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people we serve by (a) combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds; (b) working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way; and (c) sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability to achieve objectives (both the collective partnership’s objectives and individual partner goals) that could not be achieved as efficiently, effectively or innovatively alone, and where the value created is greater than the transaction costs involved.” (WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy 2014-2017)

### Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR)

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<td>“a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.” (World Health Organization, 2006, <a href="http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/sexuality/defining_sexual_health/en/">Defining sexual health: Report of a technical consultation on sexual health</a>)</td>
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<td>“all persons, without distinction, are able to receive the highest attainable standard of health in relation to sexuality, including access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services; seek and impart information in relation to sexuality; receive sexuality education; have respect for bodily integrity; have a free choice of partner; decide to be sexually active or not; have consensual sexual relations; have consensual marriage; decide whether or not and when to have children and pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.” (World Health Organization, 2006, <a href="http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/sexuality/defining_sexual_health/en/">Defining sexual health: Report of a technical consultation on sexual health</a>)</td>
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<td>“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.” (United Nations, 1994, Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, A/CONF.171/13, para 7.2.)</td>
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<td>the rights of all persons “to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health. They also include the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents.” (United Nations, 1994, Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, A/CONF.171/13, para 7.3.)</td>
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### Gender Based Violence (GBV)
“Gender-based Violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical,
### Sexual Exploitation

“Sexual exploitation means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.” (United Nation’s Secretary-General, Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, ST/SGB/2003/13.)

### Sexual Abuse

“Sexual abuse means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.” (United Nation’s Secretary-General, Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, ST/SGB/2003/13.)

### Sexual Harassment

“Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advance or unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.” ([WFP Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority](#))

### Harassment

“Harassment is any improper conduct by an individual that is directed at and offensive to another person in the workplace and that the individual knew, or reasonably ought to have known, would cause offence or harm to that person. Harassment does not have to be intentional or deliberate – what is important is how the improper conduct is perceived by a reasonable individual and the subsequent effect it has on the other person.” ([WFP Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority](#))

### Protection

“All activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the intrinsic rights of all individuals in accordance with international law – international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law – taking into account differences in age, gender, minority or other background.” (Inter-Agency Standing Committee Emergency Directors’ Group, 2015, [Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle](#), Preliminary Guidance Note, p. 8.)