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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT – THE SUDAN COUNTRY PORTFOLIO (2010–2012)



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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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BACKGROUND

1. This document presents the management response to the Sudan country portfolio evaluation (CPE) (2010–2012), which assessed WFP’s strategic alignment and positioning, the factors driving strategic decision-making, and overall performance and results. Overall, the findings of the CPE suggest that the portfolio was coherent with international humanitarian principles, and relevant to humanitarian needs. The evaluation recognizes the complex operational environment in which portfolio activities were carried out.
2. Management welcomes the recommendations of the CPE, which are positive and forward-looking. WFP is mindful of the importance of improving its targeting; large-scale verification exercises in the main camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Darfur, followed by camp profiling will facilitate WFP’s tailoring of assistance to needs. WFP has initiated the transition from emergency food assistance to more targeted food distribution where possible, complementing these efforts with activities that support early recovery and resilience-building.
3. WFP recognizes the importance of maintaining the capacity to respond to recurring crises while increasing recovery and resilience-building activities to reduce the need for emergency assistance. WFP is equally committed to enhancing the capacities of Government, local institutions and civil society to assume ownership and responsibility for food security and nutrition. However, implementation of this transition strategy is hampered by the fluid security situation. The CPE emphasizes the opportunities for WFP to develop more strategic partnerships, which will be a top priority for WFP in the Sudan in 2014, given that consistent support of all stakeholders will be essential for successful implementation of this strategy.
4. Actions for addressing the CPE recommendations are presented in the attached matrix. Management recognizes that several themes emerging from this evaluation may also be useful in guiding other WFP offices with similar operational profiles, such as enhancing partnership coordination, shifting towards longer-term planning, and improving the country-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and systems.

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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>Partnership and coordination Recommendation 1: The country office must improve its partnerships and coordination with United Nations and other development actors in the Sudan. Coordination and information-sharing regarding planning and decision-making should be more regular; as the largest humanitarian actor in the Sudan, WFP should use its presence to support strategic partnership building:</p> <p>Recommendation 1a: The country office should strengthen its role in inter-agency mechanisms such as the Humanitarian Country Team and the food security and livelihood sector mechanism at the federal and state levels.</p>	<p>Country office</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Strong partnerships and effective coordination are priorities of the Sudan country office, as demonstrated by the multitude of long-term partnership arrangements, including service provision agreements with humanitarian actors for logistics and information and communications technology (ICT); agreements with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur for common service provision; and management of radio operation rooms for the humanitarian community in the Sudan, on behalf of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security.</p> <p>The country office has also taken steps to enhance WFP's leadership role and formalize programme-based partnerships with United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Early in 2013, the country office established a Partnerships Unit, responsible for optimizing partnerships.</p> <p>Action 1a: WFP will continue to prioritize participation in the Humanitarian Country Team and its mechanisms. In 2013, logistics and ICT clusters were created from the common service cluster; WFP will continue to lead both clusters and will strengthen its role in the co-led food security and livelihood sector by recruiting a full-time staff member to support coordination of the sector at the Khartoum and state levels. The country office is also recruiting a staff member for partnerships and interagency coordination to head its new Partnerships Unit.</p>	<p>November 2013</p>



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<p>Recommendation 1b: WFP should establish long-term, formal partnerships with United Nations agencies to ensure appropriate selection and sustainable implementation of recovery activities.</p>	Country office	<p>Action 1b: The country office will continue to be guided by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Humanitarian Work Plan and the Darfur Development Strategy of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) for its engagement with key United Nations partners. Within these frameworks, the country office is establishing partnerships for resilience-building and nutrition. Memoranda of understanding are being finalized, including with the Ministry of Health for Nutrition and a Letter of Understanding on the nutrition response in the Sudan with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Population Fund. Opportunities are being explored for a joint resilience project in East Sudan with FAO and UNICEF, and for early recovery and adaptation programming with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme and IFAD.</p>	December 2013
<p>Recommendation 1c: WFP should move from six-monthly to annual field-level agreements with more field partners, to increase efficiency and effectiveness through longer-term planning and support.</p>	Country office	<p>Action 1c: Not all field-level agreements (FLAs) can be for 12 months, but the FLA process and related documents are under review. Ongoing financial analysis will determine which FLAs could be extended to 12 months.</p>	March 2014



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<p>Strategy shift towards longer term planning Recommendation 2: In the next country strategy, beneficiaries and development actors should have a greater role in identifying the mix of emergency, relief and recovery activities, and activities should be oriented towards improving self-reliance. While WFP needs to retain flexibility and the capacity to respond to recurrent and emerging crises, the portfolio should have a longer-term horizon with the aim of saving lives and rebuilding/protecting livelihoods:</p> <p>Recommendation 2a. The portfolio and its operations should be designed with longer-term objectives wherever possible. Planning cycles should be more aligned to those of United Nations partners and the Government.</p> <p>Recommendation 2b. The school feeding strategy should be revised and aligned with those of partners, and new ways of increasing the possibility of Government ownership should be explored.</p>	<p>Country office</p> <p>Country office</p>	<p>Agreed. WFP's strategy in the Sudan is guided by and embedded in the frameworks of the DDPD, the UNDAF and the United Nations humanitarian response framework. Aligned with these, the country office will update the country strategy, to clarify its longer-term vision, ensuring the correct scale for emergency operations while remaining prepared to respond to crises; increasing recovery and resilience-building activities to reduce emergency assistance; and increasing the ownership and capacities of the Government, local institutions and civil society. The strategy will include priority actions for nutrition, resilience programming and nationally owned school feeding.</p> <p>Action 2a: In updating its country strategy, the country office will – to the extent possible – formulate longer-term objectives in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The increasing conflicts and consequent displacements in Darfur and North and South Kordofan during the first half of 2013, and the continuous fighting ever since will necessitate a new emergency operation in 2014. If the situation stabilizes, WFP may shift to a protracted relief and recovery operation for 2015–2016.</p> <p>Action 2b: The country office is working with the Government to develop a national school feeding strategy and is advocating for a national policy.</p> <p>Home-grown school feeding is being piloted in North Kordofan. Current discussions with the World Bank and UNICEF seek to enhance collaboration in the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme.</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>October 2013</p> <p>November 2013</p>



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<p>Recommendation 2c: The portfolio should include more activities for developing the self-reliance of communities and the emergency preparedness capacities of the authorities.</p>	Country office	<p>Action 2c: WFP has recruited an international expert to develop a livelihoods and recovery strategy based on lessons learned from various pilots, particularly the Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy (SAFE) project. WFP participated in the 2013–2016 UNDAF process, and with UNEP is co-leading UNDAF Pillar 1 Outcome 2: “Populations vulnerable to environmental risks and climate change become more resilient and relevant institutions are more effective in the sustainable management of natural resources.”</p> <p>WFP is designing a joint resilience project with UNICEF and FAO in eastern Sudan, and already supports capacity development of the Humanitarian Aid Commission and of the Government in targeting and food security and emergency assessments.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2013</p>
<p>Monitoring, evaluation and reporting</p> <p>Recommendation 3: With support and guidance from Headquarters and the regional bureau, the country office’s M&E framework and system must be thoroughly reviewed and enhanced, with a shift in emphasis from counting beneficiaries and food tonnage to measuring results, outcomes and impacts achieved.</p> <p>Recommendation 3a: Data collection should be expanded, focusing on outputs, coverage, outcomes and impacts. Outcome indicators specific to the WFP Sudan portfolio should be added to the M&E framework, enabling inter-year comparison of outcomes and results. Existing nutrition data should be compiled and information gaps filled, in collaboration with partners. Data collection for all activities should be more regular and better adapted to context, and results should be used systematically in decision-making.</p>	Country office	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The country office is reviewing the M&E system and developing a strategy with area offices and partners. Output, process and outcome indicators will be regularly reported to internal and external stakeholders, with support from the regional bureau and Headquarters units. The country office plans to implement case/impact studies for longer-term and high-profile interventions.</p> <p>3a. The country office’s M&E strategy will provide the overall framework for systematic collection of outcome, process and output indicators. Data collection methodologies and limitations will be documented in the strategy, which will be updated to reflect any changes in methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Existing information systems are being reviewed and upgraded. ➤ Projects will be realigned with the new strategic results framework and country-specific outcome indicators will be included. 	<p>March 2014</p> <p>December 2013</p> <p>December 2013</p>



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<p>Recommendation 3b: Dissemination of M&E information to all partners should be structured and regular, with accountability established for the application of standardized data collection methods and the consistency of data reporting.</p> <p>Recommendation 3c: One-off assessments should be conducted to fill major knowledge gaps, including: i) comparative assessments of modality effectiveness; ii) the contributions of supplementary feeding and blanket supplementary feeding (BSF) to mitigating malnutrition rates, in collaboration with partners; iii) review of evidence of IDPs' coping mechanisms in Darfur, with further data collection if needed; and iv) measurement of the effects of decisions such as ration cuts and gaps in assistance, taking advantage of comparative conditions, to generate evidence and lessons on results and impacts.</p>	<p>Country office</p> <p>Country office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Data collection methods are being reviewed and standardized. ➤ Introduction of the country office monitoring and evaluation tool (COMET) implementation module will enhance data consistency. ➤ The results of a recent nutrition and food security assessment of households with children enrolled in supplementary feeding programmes will be shared. <p>3b. The country office will improve the communication of M&E findings through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ regular meetings with partners at the central and sub-national levels to discuss M&E findings and the tracking of follow-up actions, among other issues; ➤ preparation and dissemination of regular M&E reports summarizing major findings and actions. <p>3c. WFP will carry out one-off assessments to fill knowledge gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A comparative evaluation of cash/voucher and in-kind food activities was carried out in North and West Darfur in April 2013. ➤ WFP continues to measure the performance of supplementary feeding programmes against the Sphere standards. ➤ IDPs' coping mechanisms will be assessed through in-depth analysis of the most recent food security monitoring system (FSMS) data. ➤ An impact assessment of the SAFE programme is being finalized. ➤ WFP will implement a camp profiling exercise. ➤ The impact of reduced levels of assistance is assessed through post-distribution monitoring. 	<p>March 2014</p> <p>December 2014</p> <p>December 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2013</p> <p>December 2013</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>December 2013</p> <p>December 2014</p> <p>Ongoing</p>



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<p>Assessment and targeting</p> <p>Recommendation 4a: The optimal use of limited resources should be ensured by further refining targeting, continuing the verification exercises, and expanding regular community profiling so that the most vulnerable people in prioritized communities are reached.</p> <p>Recommendation 4b: More regular engagement with communities should be planned, and feedback used to refine the targeting of food assistance.</p>	<p>Country office</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The country office's strategy for improving targeting is based on three pillars: i) IDP verification; ii) camp profiling; and iii) retargeting. IDP verification is near completion and WFP is focusing on camp profiling. The country office has initiated two pilots to test different methodologies for defining vulnerability criteria and profiling IDPs and camps, using verification data, vulnerability analysis and mapping, and direct engagement of IDPs and local communities. In 2014, WFP expects to roll out the camp profiling exercise in all verified camps. Based on the results of this exercise, the country office will refine its programme response and the retargeting approach for verified IDPs. For all activities in IDP camps, beneficiary consultations and sensitization are essential for identifying the best type and level of support.</p> <p>The country office will pilot an approach for engaging communities at the area office level in the identification of vulnerability characteristics among currently assisted IDPs.</p> <p>After the pilot, camp profiling will be rolled out across Darfur in 2014, including a beneficiary feedback mechanism.</p> <p>In parallel, stakeholders will be involved in the adaptation and targeting of programmes based on household vulnerability levels.</p> <p>Based on the results of camp profiling, food assistance programmes will be adjusted and an IDP retargeting exercise implemented. The effects of these decisions will be assessed through post-distribution monitoring and the FSMS throughout 2014; lessons learned will be documented.</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>Early 2014</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>November 2013</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>December 2014</p>



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CPE	country portfolio evaluation
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLA	field-level agreement
FSMS	food security monitoring system
ICT	information and communications technology
IDP	internally displaced persons
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
SAFE	Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund