

# **BACKGROUND PAPER ON COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLANS**



## **Informal Consultation**

**7 December 2015**

**World Food Programme**  
Rome, Italy

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## **PURPOSE**

1. This update of the country strategic planning approach summarizes the process of implementing country-level planning, clarifies issues raised at the 21 September 2015 informal consultation and provides information on WFP's plan to pilot the budgeting for operational effectiveness work stream of the Financial Framework Review in line with the country strategic planning approach.

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## **SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS**

2. The new country strategic planning approach aims to support countries in: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Sustainable Development Goal 2; operationalizing WFP's Strategic Plan; improving operational effectiveness and efficiency at the country level – including in emergencies; demonstrating WFP's contributions to global food security and nutrition priorities and goals; and improving WFP's strategic positioning at national and global levels.
3. The country-level planning process consists of a strategic review and formulation of a Country Strategic Plan. The strategic review: i) provides a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the country's humanitarian and development context; ii) identifies humanitarian and development challenges to achieving zero hunger, including gaps in the national response, resources and institutional capacity; and iii) proposes areas in which partners, including WFP, can take action to support the country's acceleration toward zero hunger.
4. The findings and recommendations of the strategic review inform the Country Strategic Plan and contribute to national development planning and United Nations system-wide plans. Country Strategic Plans: comprise WFP's entire humanitarian and development portfolio of assistance during a four- or five-year period; define WFP's role based on country needs and WFP's comparative advantage; specify the results WFP will achieve during the Country Strategic Plan period; and identify the actions that will be taken to attain the jointly defined results.

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## **STATUS OF COUNTRY-LEVEL PLANNING SUPPORT**

5. WFP has completed strategic reviews in Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia and Zimbabwe, and the process is underway in Bangladesh, Colombia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Peru and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Country Strategic Plans for India, Indonesia and Zimbabwe have been reviewed and endorsed through the strategic programme review process; those for China, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania are in development. Country strategic planning processes will soon be launched in Cameroon, Pakistan and the Sudan.

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## RESPONSES TO ISSUES RAISED AT THE 21 SEPTEMBER 2015

### INFORMAL CONSULTATION

6. **Compared with project documents, Country Strategic Plans add greater value to WFP's strategic and programmatic planning because the approach is:**
- i) *Strategic.* Focusing on strategic results rather than just activities allows WFP to make critical decisions about priorities and remain centred on achieving these results, while responding to humanitarian crises. The introduction of strategic results enables WFP to be proactive and not reactive – demonstrating how its country-level humanitarian and development operations further its Strategic Objectives and contribute to global priorities – and ultimately to ending hunger. The approach provides greater transparency and increases understanding of WFP's entire overall humanitarian and development portfolio at the country level over a four- or five-year period.
  - ii) *Collaborative.* The consultative nature of both the strategic review process and the design of Country Strategic Plans provides a platform for alignment with national priorities and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), and fosters collaboration with United Nations country teams (UNCTs) and other actors. Results of the review also inform these processes.
  - iii) *Comprehensive.* Reviewing a country's entire humanitarian and development portfolio – excluding responses to sudden-onset disasters – instead of piecemeal reviews of project documents improves internal governance and the Board's ability to provide strategic oversight. It also facilitates donors' understanding of the impact of WFP interventions in each country, especially the linkages between humanitarian response and development assistance.
  - iv) *Takes a long-term perspective while retaining agility.* The strategic results in Country Strategic Plans are formulated to position countries by the end of the Country Strategic Plan period to achieve long-term goals. This long-term perspective enhances WFP's and countries' preparedness to manage food insecurity, including that related to shocks and disruptions, and facilitates the transition of WFP's role within each country.
  - v) *Efficient and effective.* The approach increases efficiency and creates savings by reducing fragmentation among projects and minimizing transaction costs for regional bureaux, country offices and the Board. More importantly, the approach ensures a focus on WFP's comparative advantage in each country, eliminating activities that WFP is not best placed to implement. Country Strategic Plans help WFP to maximize its impact by defining the optimum response.
7. ***The country strategic planning approach enhances WFP's ability and preparedness to deliver humanitarian assistance.*** WFP's strength as a humanitarian agency lies in having the systems in place to deliver appropriate assistance. By proactively engaging through Country Strategic Plans, WFP is better positioned to meet beneficiaries' needs and strengthen national response capacity.

8. ***The country strategic planning approach is integrated into initiatives*** such as WFP's new Strategic Plan (2017–2021) and Corporate Results Framework, and the Financial Framework Review's country portfolio budget. Integrating country strategic planning with these processes enhances WFP's capacity to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. As WFP's primary country-level programming framework, discussions on the country strategic planning approach are being prioritized to ensure that the approach is logically sound and can be supported by the emerging country portfolio budget financial architecture. Several WFP business units are working together to meet this objective, which will ensure that the country strategic planning approach and the Financial Framework Review's budgeting for operational effectiveness (country portfolio budget) work stream operationalize the new WFP Strategic Plan.
9. ***Country Strategic Plans are applicable in all operational contexts.*** Country Strategic Plans will replace protracted relief and recovery operations, country programmes, development projects and other WFP plannable assistance in all contexts; following consideration of all relevant implications, they will also encompass emergency operations. The allocations by context in the 2016 programme of work approved by the Board are: disruptions and shocks (45 percent), preparedness and recovery (46 percent), and poverty and vulnerability (9 percent).
10. **The country strategic planning approach ensures coordination with the country-level efforts of other Rome-based agencies and UNDAFs, and defines WFP's comparative advantages.** The country strategic planning approach not only ensures alignment with UNDAFs, but enhances collaboration with governments, other United Nations agencies (especially the Rome-based agencies), the World Bank and other actors. The strategic review process is independent and consultative, involving a range of government stakeholders, UNCTs, donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and other actors. The priorities and periods of Country Strategic Plans consider national planning and UNDAF cycles. For example, strategic reviews are initiated in coordination with Resident Coordinators and UNCTs to ensure coherence and facilitate integrated design and implementation.
11. This highly consultative process fosters productive discussions with governments and other partners to identify each partner's most appropriate role and comparative advantage in response, including WFP. While strategic reviews are currently funded by WFP in order to demonstrate the value of the process and facilitate hand-over, governments will ultimately be responsible for funding the review process. Partners at the country level are encouraged to provide support. The annexes highlight the distinguishing consultative feature of the country strategic planning process in the examples of Indonesia and Zimbabwe.

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## LEARNING FROM PILOTING COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLANS IN INDONESIA AND ZIMBABWE

12. WFP's Financial Framework Review is examining challenges in the financial architecture that are limiting funding predictability and flexibility, and accountability for WFP's resources. The work streams in the Financial Framework Review include resource-based planning, macro advance financing, budgeting for operational effectiveness/country portfolio budget and cross-cutting initiatives.

13. The budgeting for operational effectiveness (country portfolio budget) work stream includes a review of WFP's operational budget structure in order to align resource and performance management, and reduce the emphasis on cost components. Budgeting pilots related to this work stream are under consideration.
14. Pending the development of budgeting for operational effectiveness/country portfolio budget pilots, which could be conducted along the country strategic planning approach, Country Strategic Plans could be field-tested as programmatic frameworks in Zimbabwe and Indonesia – two countries that have already benefitted from the new country strategic planning approach, using appropriate existing budgeting structures. Field-testing Country Strategic Plans in these two countries would provide valuable learning experiences, including from alternative budgeting and performance monitoring and reporting processes, prior to finalizing the country strategic planning approach proposal for Board approval in November 2016.

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## **INDONESIA COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

In 2014, WFP commissioned a strategic review of food security and nutrition in Indonesia as part of a middle-income country pilot exercise. The review sought to produce practical recommendations for achieving food security and improving nutrition in line with the United Nations Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge, which has been integrated into Sustainable Development Goal 2.

In Indonesia, the SMERU Research Institute conducted an independent strategic review of national food security and nutrition, utilizing consultative processes from April to October 2014. The review was based on a comprehensive and holistic analysis of food and nutrition security in Indonesia. It aimed to identify bottlenecks to achieving food and nutrition security while recommending actions for achieving this objective.

The head of the President's Delivery Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight led the review's advisory board, which engaged a broad range of stakeholders and elicited inputs from experts in more than 20 ministries, universities and other bodies. The findings were reviewed by stakeholders including United Nations agencies, private-sector partners, donors and civil society organizations. SMERU and the advisory board identified areas in which WFP has a comparative advantage in supporting the Government together with other United Nations agencies.

The strategic review provided the basis for discussions with many stakeholders about WFP's Indonesia Country Strategic Plan. In April 2015, the Coordinating Ministry of Human Welfare and Cultural Affairs conducted a review of the Country Programme Action Plan 2012–2015. Achievements and lessons learned were identified by WFP's national and provincial partners, including the heads of three districts where WFP implemented school feeding and mother-and-child health and nutrition projects.

The findings of the strategic review, in conjunction with those of the joint WFP and Government 2015 Atlas of Food Security and Vulnerability in Indonesia, are being considered by the National Food Security Council, which is chaired by the President, in order to prioritize resources for achieving food security.

The review also provided a platform for discussions with government and United Nations partners, which helped to shape the Country Strategic Plan. In May 2015, the Ministry of Development Planning hosted a consultation comprising representatives from the Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Cultural Affairs, the Ministries of Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Health and Social Affairs, and the National Disaster Management Agency to discuss options for cooperation between WFP and the Government.

The Country Strategic Plan was also informed by the United Nations Partnership Development Framework. During its formulation, the UNCT was consulted to ensure complementarity among activities and alignment with the National Medium-Term Development Plan. These consultations involved in-depth conversations with staff from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to identify each organization's comparative advantage. Consultations were also conducted with civil-society organizations, the private sector and other development partners to minimize duplication and identify opportunities for collaboration.

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## **ZIMBABWE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

WFP's country strategic planning process in Zimbabwe benefitted from that country's Zero Hunger Strategic Review and numerous other consultations.

The Zero Hunger Strategic Review was conducted through a consultative process that identified the main challenges to achieving zero hunger and indicated priority areas for action to achieve this goal. Initiated in August of 2014, the review was led by Professor Hope Sadza, Vice Chancellor and Founder of the Women's University in Africa, and was supported by a team of researchers. An advisory group including representatives from the Food and Nutrition Council and other government entities, NGOs, United Nations agencies and other partners guided the process.

The six-month review included an analysis of documentation related to food and nutrition security and extensive and inclusive consultations with at both national and sub-national levels. The team also held multiple bilateral meetings with key government entities. A workshop was held in March 2015 to discuss the research team's findings and jointly prioritize identified gaps and recommendations. The strategic review report was completed in April 2015, discussed by Cabinet and endorsed by Zimbabwe's Acting President in June.

In addition to the review, the Country Strategic Plan was informed by an April 2014 programme strategy mission, which explored the main shifts in the portfolio, from large-scale humanitarian assistance to more geographically focused and integrated resilience building activities. In 2014, the country office held a series of briefings with stakeholders including WFP's main counterpart, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, and discussions with donor countries to build consensus for the strategic shift.

The country strategic plan was also informed by an Integrated Context Analysis, which was shared with the UNCT in 2014. This analysis highlighted WFP's comparative advantage in generating evidence for resilience building and created opportunities for collaboration. WFP became a major contributor to the Zimbabwe resilience framework, which is funded by a multi-donor mechanism managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). There has also been progress on a joint resilience programming approach with UNICEF and FAO that will focus on district-level food and nutrition security.