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Update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response

Executive summary

In 2017, United Nations-coordinated appeals and refugee response plans required a record USD 24.7 billion to support over 105 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection because of conflict, natural hazards and climate change. The appeals raised USD 13.8 billion, or 56 percent of the amount required.

The need was severe: famine was declared in parts of South Sudan, and famine-like conditions were detected in northeast Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen. Concerted and sustained humanitarian action provided people with emergency food and other assistance, saving lives that otherwise would have been lost.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its subsidiary bodies continue to be the key forum for deliberation and coordination among humanitarian partners, striving to achieve the most effective and efficient humanitarian action possible. With the number of protracted crises rising, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee principals launched a review of the protocols and decision-making processes for triggering an Inter-Agency Standing Committee system-wide Level 3 response. The principals endorsed revised commitments to ensure accountability to affected populations; reaffirmed their zero tolerance stance on sexual harassment and abuse in the humanitarian sector; and approved the revised Inter-Agency Standing Committee policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian action, along with its revised accountability framework. They also tested and validated the protocol for system-wide responses to outbreaks of infectious disease. These decisions reinforced commitments and actions taken following the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

WFP strengthened its efforts to alleviate suffering through a range of tools and approaches reflecting the increasingly complex links between conflict, migration and food security. The organization increased investments at or near people's places of origin to mitigate potential causes of irregular migration and worked to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. Multiple protracted crises and unprecedented global challenges spurred a scale-up in emergency

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response through WFP-led clusters and shared humanitarian services. WFP and its partners delivered more than USD 1.4 billion in cash-based transfers and WFP increased its investment in local and national capacity strengthening as localization remained high on the humanitarian agenda. Various partnerships were strengthened, including through support for the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation in response to the growing need to address access challenges arising from increasingly complex operational settings.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the update on WFP's role in the collective humanitarian response set out in document WFP/EB.A/2018/5-E.

I - Global context

Growing needs and the funding gap

1. In 2017, 20 million people – including 1.4 million children – were threatened with famine, primarily as a consequence of avoidable human-induced disasters. Famine was declared in parts of South Sudan, and famine-like conditions were detected in northeast Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen. Concerted and sustained humanitarian action provided people with emergency food and other assistance, saving lives that otherwise would have been lost. In South Sudan and Nigeria, WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) set up rapid response teams to reach places that were too difficult to reach by road, often because of insecurity or their remote locations. Joint teams flew in by helicopter to assess the situation and the numbers of people in need and then provided assistance adequate to meet food, health and other basic requirements for a month. The rapid response teams were a crucial lifeline but required sustained humanitarian access.
2. At the beginning of the year, the Emergency Relief Coordinator called for USD 22.2 billion to respond to the needs of 92.8 million people, the largest ever humanitarian appeal. This figure rose to USD 24.7 billion at the end of the year in support of 105 million people, mainly because of two new human-induced crises, in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Bangladesh following the influx of refugees from Myanmar. Successive hurricanes in the Caribbean also left many in need. Although donor funding increased and the risk of famine was averted, the appeals were funded at USD 13.8 billion, or 56 percent of requirements.
3. WFP broadened its partnerships, working to increase the coherence between humanitarian and development activities. In Sudan, WFP and partners embarked on the “New Way of Working” by developing a plan of action to realize humanitarian, development and peacebuilding priorities. A multi-year humanitarian strategy for 2017–2019 was developed and linked to the country's United Nations development assistance framework, aligning humanitarian and development goals. WFP's engagement supported the priorities of the Sudan interim country strategic plan for 2017–2018.

United Nations reform

4. At the start of 2017, newly appointed Secretary-General António Guterres put forward a roadmap for creating a “twenty-first century United Nations development system” that is

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

better able to serve people in need. The plan was an ambitious process for reforming the United Nations development system, peace and security architecture and internal management that is likely to have implications for the humanitarian system, particularly in terms of country-level leadership, coordination and financing.

5. Executive and deputy-level committees were set up in January 2017, as part of new United Nations decision-making and management structures. These are an avenue for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to advocate for its priorities and engage with the Secretary-General through the Emergency Relief Coordinator and his deputy. Examples of the Secretary-General's support for IASC include his engagement at the high-level pledging conference for Yemen in April 2017 and the famine response.
6. The Secretary-General also established a joint steering committee under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General to advance humanitarian and development collaboration at the United Nations executive head level to guide and support field efforts to articulate and implement collective outcomes over time based on the comparative advantage of a diverse group of actors. WFP's dual mandate and its alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development position the organization well to contribute to humanitarian, development and peace outcomes. WFP's contribution to the work of the committee is focused on eliminating needs and reducing risks and vulnerabilities while promoting a people-centred approach. At its first meeting, in November 2017, the committee, in reaffirming its overall focus, underlined its role as an effective problem-solving mechanism, with an emphasis on specific geographic contexts.

Global processes

7. WFP continues to act upon its World Humanitarian Summit commitments, positioning itself as a leader in the delivery of more efficient and effective humanitarian assistance. WFP is monitoring and reporting on progress on its 92 commitments through self-reports available on the online Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation and its annual performance report.
8. In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the General Assembly in September 2016 during the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants, Member States committed to launching intergovernmental negotiations and working towards the adoption of two global compacts: one on refugees and another on safe, orderly and regular migration.

Global compact on refugees

9. The global compact on refugees has two parts: the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, agreed to by Member States in the New York Declaration; and a programme of action that draws upon good practices from around the world and sets out measures to be taken by Member States and others to operationalize the principles of the New York Declaration. Formal consultations, begun in February 2018 and expected to continue through July, will inform the final text, which the High Commissioner will put forward in his 2018 annual report to the General Assembly. In 2017, thematic discussions and lessons learned from countries already applying the framework¹ informed the zero draft of the programme of action. WFP participated in various consultations, presenting the WFP-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Joint Strategy for Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Refugee Situations, which calls for fostering greater levels of refugee self-reliance in food security and nutrition.

¹ The framework is being applied in Belize, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Mexico, Panama, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia, as well as in Somalia through a regional approach involving neighbouring countries.

Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration

10. WFP is a member of the Global Migration Group, which brings together the heads of agencies to promote the broader application of all international and regional instruments and norms related to migration and to encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better-coordinated approaches to international migration. The group is currently co-chaired by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Organization for Migration.
11. WFP contributed to the Secretary-General's report "Making Migration Work for All". The document was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/280, in which the Assembly asked the Secretary-General to present a report as input for the zero draft of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and related intergovernmental negotiations. The report highlights the need to assist vulnerable migrants, such as those who have faced violence, exploitation or hunger. It also describes the impact of climate change on food security and migration.
12. WFP took part in informal thematic sessions that shaped the development of the compact, and the Rome-based agencies issued a joint statement underlining the pivotal role played by rural and agricultural sectors in addressing the drivers of migration. Formal negotiations began in February 2018 and will culminate in the adoption of the compact at an intergovernmental conference in December 2018.
13. The WFP report "At the Root of Exodus: Food security, conflict and international migration" and other related studies were shared with the Global Migration Group and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration to inform the development of the compact.

Conflict and hunger

14. In 2017, WFP and partners worked to improve the collective understanding of the links between conflict and hunger and to identify potential courses of action that contribute to preventing conflict and sustaining peace. The Rome-based agencies and the Netherlands and Switzerland co-organized a series of three events in New York, Rome and Geneva, the outcomes of which were presented in a report prepared by the Humanitarian Policy Group of the Overseas Development Institute. The report's conclusions will be brought to the attention of the Security Council in 2018.
15. In September 2017, complementing the conflict and hunger discussion series of the Group of Friends on Food Security and the Group of Friends on Protection of Civilians, WFP and the Oxford Martin School hosted a high-level event examining the correlation between food security and broader security, taking the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic as a case study. The event brought together delegates from the humanitarian and development sectors, Member States, the military and academia. One of the outcomes was a potential pilot project aimed at re-establishing food systems in post-conflict settings, promoting food security stability to foster lasting peace. The event also highlighted the need for additional research on the correlation between hunger and conflict.

II – Collective response

Inter-Agency Standing Committee

16. In 2017, The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) continued to be an important forum for deliberations and coordination among humanitarian partners. Chaired by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, the committee met several times during the year. The IASC principals met in April and December, focusing on collective advocacy for people in need and international humanitarian law, the financing of the humanitarian

- system, how to ensure an effective collective response and how to streamline IASC structures to support strategic decision making and facilitate action.
17. In recognition of WFP's critical contribution to food security, the Programme was given the lead role in the development of shared advocacy messages on the four countries facing or at risk of famine to support ongoing collective advocacy by the IASC and by individual member organizations.
 18. Through a simulation exercise, the principals validated the IASC system-wide activation procedures for infectious disease events, which aims to ensure an effective collective response in the event of large-scale outbreaks. The principals also agreed to convene an informal deputies forum, chaired by the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, primarily to follow up on strategic and policy decisions that have system-wide implications.
 19. The IASC principals requested a review of the system-wide Level 3 response activation protocol to ensure that the mechanism was able to trigger scaled-up responses to large new crises and adapt to protracted crises. The revised response mechanism is expected to be discussed during a joint meeting of the IASC Working Group and the IASC Emergency Directors meeting in April 2018 and to be submitted to the principals for approval in May.
 20. In late 2016, the principals appointed "co-champions" on sexual harassment and abuse of aid workers. In 2017, the co-champions convened an IASC task team to conduct a system-wide survey and provide more systematic and deeper analysis of the issue, to inform an action plan. The task team identified challenges related to data collection and analysis, confidentiality and privacy. It highlighted the need to gather better information about the circumstances in which harassment and abuse take place, what works to prevent them and what actions can be taken in response to them. In March 2017, the principals issued a joint statement reaffirming their collective commitment to zero tolerance of sexual harassment and abuse in the humanitarian sector. They called on humanitarian coordinators to share the statement with their country teams and the broader in-country humanitarian community and to ensure that staff were aware of the governance structures and support available.
 21. The IASC senior focal points on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) were convened by the Director General of the International Organization for Migration, in his role as IASC champion on the issue. The meeting was an opportunity to report achievements, share best practices and discuss ongoing implementation challenges together with progress made towards implementing PSEA minimum operating standards and recruitment. WFP gave an update on internal reporting mechanisms, training programmes and the mandatory measures in place to ensure that staff were aware of corporate policies and means to channel information and seek support.
 22. Reflecting IASC's continued commitment to people-centred humanitarian action, the principals endorsed revisions to the IASC commitments on accountability to affected populations, which were originally agreed in 2011. The revised commitments were developed by the accountability to affected populations (AAP)/PSEA task team and reflect developments such as the Core Humanitarian Standard and minimum standards on PSEA; the shift in focus from organizational to collective approaches to AAP and PSEA; IASC work on inter-agency community-based complaint mechanisms, including with regard to PSEA; and the importance of engaging in equitable partnerships with local actors.
 23. Through several ad hoc meetings, the principals examined emergency situations that required system-wide Level 3 responses. They discussed how to ensure the right leadership was in place in the field in the form of humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams. Another priority pursued by the principals was to tailor responses to local conditions and government capacities in support of national systems and programmes.

24. The IASC Working Group held one regular meeting in April to develop a new vision for IASC in the context of a changing world, which included creating links with other humanitarian actors and influencers such as civil society stakeholders and through social media. The potential implications of the United Nations Secretary-General's proposals for reform of the international humanitarian community were discussed, particularly in relation to the New Way of Working and the broader humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
25. A light review of the Working Group's task teams and reference groups assessed their efficiency, effectiveness and operational relevance. The review reaffirmed the importance of these bodies as platforms for NGO engagement with IASC and vehicles for inter-agency discussion. It also highlighted the need to forge more systematic links among the groups both within and beyond IASC. The review recommended that seven of the ten task teams and referenced groups continue their programmes of work pending a formal review at the end of 2018.
26. WFP increased its involvement in the humanitarian-development nexus task team and co-facilitated a peer-to-peer workshop on advancing humanitarian and development collaboration in Entebbe, Uganda, in November 2017. Since then, the Programme has been managing an IASC community of practice on the nexus.
27. Subsidiary bodies of the Working Group were tasked with developing guidance and inter-agency policy on several issues, including on AAP and PSEA; humanitarian financing; protection priority; and strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, with a focus on protracted contexts. WFP was a co-sponsor of the humanitarian financing task team, which developed definitions of "local and national responders" and "as direct as possible" for use in measuring direct and indirect funding to local and national actors and served as an incubator for discussions on the IASC localization marker. A multi-year financing study was commissioned by the Norwegian Refugee Council, FAO and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to contribute to the work plan of the task team, setting a range of challenges beyond simply improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian response.
28. Alongside the task teams, a number of reference groups continued to serve as communities of practice risk, early warning and preparedness, gender and humanitarian action, meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas, mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings, principled humanitarian action and protracted displacements.
29. In December 2017, the IASC principals endorsed a revised IASC policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian action, along with its revised accountability framework, which was formulated by the gender and humanitarian action reference group.
30. The reference group on risk, early warning and preparedness, co-chaired by WFP, worked to ensure system-wide preparedness measures. The group met in early 2018 to set priorities for the year and review progress in 2017. Highlights included an OCHA-led emergency response preparedness protocol, implemented in 62 countries. An additional 17 countries plan to start using the protocol.
31. The IASC early warning analysts group, led by WFP, continued to produce an early warning, early action and readiness analysis report every six months. The analysis highlights the areas most at risk of a large increase in humanitarian needs during the following six months and indicates where additional inter-agency preparedness may be required. At its last meeting the group identified 31 risks to monitor in the following months, bringing the most serious risks to the attention of the IASC principals.
32. WFP participated in the gender and humanitarian action reference group, providing technical inputs for the revision of the IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action,

associated learning materials and the IASC Gender Policy, revised versions of which were formally endorsed by IASC in early 2018.

33. The Emergency Directors Group met several times in 2017 and discussed the performance of humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams in an annual exercise at the start of the year. A smaller group of emergency directors took part in a field trip to Somalia to advise on coordinated response. The group also reviewed ongoing system-wide Level 3 responses, advising the principals on their extension or deactivation. A joint discussion was held with donors on resourcing for Level 3 responses to the humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Peer2Peer support mechanism (formerly known as the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team) continued to conduct field visits where requested by humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams. The team, which includes a senior WFP staff member on secondment, provided practical advice on coordination and planning in accordance with inter-agency guidance. It also ran a series of webinars for humanitarian practitioners, covering subjects such as joint needs assessments, gender-based violence and working with local actors.

Scaling up emergency responses

34. IASC maintained the system-wide Level 3 designation in response to humanitarian crises in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The global Food Security Cluster (co-led by FAO and WFP) and the WFP-led Global Logistics Cluster is active in all three system-wide Level 3 responses, while the WFP-led Emergency Telecommunications Cluster is working in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.
35. WFP's Emergency Response Activation Protocol is aligned with the system-wide activation protocol, while enabling WFP to act independently to fulfil its mandate. This aims to ensure that WFP is best positioned to deliver an effective and efficient response alongside its system-wide commitments. WFP is revising its internal protocols to align them with IASC's differentiation between the scale-up and consolidation phases of Level 3 responses.
36. WFP activated its internal Level 3 designation in all system-wide Level 3 emergencies in 2017. Internal Level 3 responses were activated or maintained in three other emergencies: Bangladesh–Myanmar, north-eastern Nigeria and South Sudan. Although IASC deactivated the Level 3 designation for South Sudan in May 2016, WFP maintained its internal Level 3 status, based on an analysis of resources and country office and regional bureau operational capacity, adhering to the "no regrets" approach outlined in the IASC Transformative Agenda. In tandem with IASC, WFP deactivated the Level 3 designation for Iraq in November 2017.
37. In addition to Level 3 emergencies, WFP continued to respond to WFP-designated Level 2 emergencies in the Central African Republic, the Horn of Africa, Iraq, Libya and Mali.
38. Since the system-wide Level 3 protocol was drawn up, a number of challenges in its use have been identified. During their consideration of the protocol, the IASC principals noted that the Level 3 system was increasingly seen as a mechanism for helping to prioritize funding across crises, as opposed to ensuring that the IASC response to a crisis was fit for purpose. They voiced concern that protracted crises that did not require a Level 3 response risked being forgotten and underfunded. Furthermore, they observed that the primary focus was on external humanitarian structures for coordinating international humanitarian responses. In recent sudden onset disaster response operations, however, the Level 3 mechanism did not adequately support the capacity of the affected governments or the work of the increasing number of non-IASC actors responding in these situations. These considerations prompted a formal review by the IASC of the system-wide Level 3 protocol.

Global clusters and shared humanitarian services

39. Since its establishment in 2011 the global Food Security Cluster, with representation in almost 30 countries, has become an important platform for the coordination of food

security responses. In 2017, through partners, the cluster provided food assistance to over 25 million people and agriculture and livelihood assistance to more than 15 million people, one third of whom were reached through cash and/or vouchers. The cluster is a platform for over 1,700 country-level partners, more than half of whom are national partners. It therefore makes a major contribution to localizing humanitarian responses and building country capacity.

40. In 2017, the WFP-led Global Logistics Cluster began field-based preparedness work in two of six pilot countries, focusing on the Preparedness Platform, an innovative mapping and analysis tool for boosting national emergency response logistics capacities. The cluster operated in 13 countries, coordinated 105 humanitarian convoys, facilitated the delivery of 70,000 mt of relief supplies, provided common storage for 286,100 m³ of humanitarian cargo and supported the distribution of over 1.4 million litres of fuel. It supported 512 organizations and trained over 1,000 people in the field, building national response capacity. Local NGOs became the biggest user group, representing 42 percent of all organizations supported by the cluster.
41. In 2017, the Global Fleet Unit deployed an average 200 trucks a month to support operations in seven countries. Demand for WFP's expertise in supply chains, logistics, operations and infrastructure works continued to rise. WFP provided bilateral services to 82 organizations in 22 countries, handling 55,000 mt of cargo and providing fuel, storage, training and other services. WFP also continued to support national infrastructure works in Guinea-Bissau and Zimbabwe.
42. The WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) was part of the humanitarian response in 14 countries. It transported 328,000 aid workers from 750 organizations, evacuated 1,580 aid workers and delivered over 31,000 mt of relief items. In South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, UNHAS airdropped 80,500 mt of cargo, including through innovative high-altitude airdrops.
43. WFP's support for health actors has grown in importance as climate-related disasters, humanitarian emergencies and insecurity have increased. To augment the emergency response capabilities of the World Health Organization (WHO), WFP constructed 30 cholera treatment centres in Yemen and deployed a helicopter to help contain an outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
44. During the year, the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) sent 575 shipments to 95 countries for 36 partner organizations, operating in the midst of some of the worst humanitarian disasters, including in Bangladesh, the Syrian Arab Republic and South Sudan. Rapid response teams installed equipment, provided technical assistance and trained local staff in the Caribbean, Madagascar and Nigeria. In cooperation with the private sector and academia, the UNHRD Lab developed a temperature controlled unit as – a large-scale storage solution for keeping items such as specialized nutritious foods at under 25°C. The unit was piloted in Somalia, and five units were subsequently installed for other United Nations agencies.
45. In 2017, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster responded to protracted crises in the Central African Republic, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen as well as to new crises in Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica and elsewhere. In the Congo and Dominica, the cluster took a lead role in enabling affected communities to obtain information. It also embarked on preparedness activities in high-risk countries, building the capacity of governments and local responders.

Humanitarian leadership

46. In 2017, WFP continued to contribute to the United Nations humanitarian coordinator and resident coordinator pools. Eighteen WFP staff members – six women and twelve men –

were qualified to take up resident coordinator positions. Six WFP staff – two women and four men – served as resident coordinators in Armenia, Bhutan, Cuba, Nigeria, Serbia and Zimbabwe. Thirteen WFP staff members – six women and seven men – were qualified for humanitarian coordination leadership positions. One male staff member served as Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria and another served as Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar.

III – Focus areas

Humanitarian programme cycle

47. WFP took part in an ad hoc IASC subgroup set up to review the humanitarian programme cycle. The subgroup aims to identify ways to improve the quality and credibility of the cycle and to gauge how well humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans support operational responses. As part of the overall objective of developing guidance for the overviews and plans that better aligns them with multi-year, multisectoral planning and the humanitarian-development nexus, the subgroup considered changes to the standard templates in the areas of evaluation and lines of accountability, multi-year planning and needs-based prioritization. The subgroup plans to propose a package of reforms at the annual humanitarian programme cycle workshop in early 2018.
48. Through the IASC costing subgroup, WFP took part in the selection of a methodology for costing humanitarian response plans. After a review of the costing methods used by humanitarian country teams to prepare such plans, in August 2017 the IASC principals endorsed the subgroup's recommendation that humanitarian country teams be given the flexibility to choose between project-based costing (the status quo) and unit-based costing (including variations of unit-based costing such as activity-based costing), as appropriate to context and capacities. The principals asked the costing subgroup to develop guidance on unit-based costing in collaboration with global clusters and to review guidance on project-based costing.

Humanitarian financing

49. In pursuit of its World Humanitarian Summit commitments, WFP has sought increased levels of flexible and predictable funding. Predictable funding is crucial for WFP's planning and efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness. It allows WFP to scale-up prevention work, reduce risks and increase resilience programmes that help households, communities and systems to retain their assets, incomes and capacities during a crisis, potentially reducing the size and duration of humanitarian responses in the future.
50. In 2017, multi-year income doubled, reaching USD 1 billion and accounting for 15 percent of total contribution income. By 31 December 2017, WFP had received multi-year contributions totalling USD 1 billion for the period 2018–2020. Over the past seven years, however, WFP's un-earmarked funding has averaged USD 415 million per year and has not kept pace with the overall growth in its contribution income. WFP continues to demonstrate the efficiencies that can be achieved through flexible funding as a way to increase this important source of humanitarian financing.
51. The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is an essential source of funding for WFP, providing life-saving assistance through its two funding windows. The fund was the seventh top donor to WFP in 2017, allowing WFP to avoid breaks in crucial pipelines during emergencies and to preserve common humanitarian services such as UNHAS. The biggest recipient of CERF funds, WFP received USD 143.2 million, or 34 percent of all CERF allocations in 2017. WFP also received USD 33.2 million from 16 of the 18 active country-based pooled funds. This was 16 percent of all allocations to United Nations agencies in 2017, but only a small portion of the USD 686 million allocated that year.

Cash-based transfers

52. In 2017, WFP made more than USD 1.4 billion worth of cash-based transfers in 61 countries in collaboration with governments, NGOs and Red Crescent and Red Cross partners, reaching 19.2 million beneficiaries compared to 14.3 million in 2016 and 9.6 million in 2015. Around 52 percent of transfers were made as unrestricted cash – a significant increase over previous years.
53. WFP continues to refine its ability to deploy the right tools through improved processes and skills. It increasingly uses government safety nets to provide assistance to vulnerable populations affected by crises or to prepare them for and respond to shocks and crises. In 2017, for example, WFP supported the Government of Turkey in providing a safety net to over 1 million refugees. In Kenya, WFP provided technical assistance to the government to scale up the cash-based hunger safety-net programme in response to the El Niño drought.
54. During 2017, WFP and its partners improved the roadmap towards global financial inclusion by connecting some of the most vulnerable people in the world to digital financial services. WFP helped millions of households to connect to financial services by opening bank accounts, activating e-wallets and facilitating access to services such as mobile money, prepaid cards and transfer services.
55. WFP and partners expanded their collaborative cash operational solutions, favouring interoperable data and beneficiary management systems, common cash delivery mechanisms and complementary blends of transfers and other modalities. Harmonization and standardization continue to be the cornerstone of United Nations and NGO partnerships related to financial service contracting, cash feasibility assessments and joint household minimum expenditure basket requirements.
56. An addendum to the WFP-UNHCR memorandum of understanding on cash-based transfers was signed in May 2017. The addendum sets out the basis for more systematic collaboration on the provision of cash assistance in refugee settings, deepening the joint work of the two organizations.

Needs assessments

57. In 2017, the Food Security Information Network was instrumental in the development of the second edition of the *Global Report on Food Crises* and “Monitoring Food Security in Countries with Conflict Situations: A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council” in June. These joint initiatives bring together United Nations agencies, NGOs and regional and global food security research institutions and are critical to ensuring greater partnership and alignment between humanitarian and development partners.
58. In 2017, for the first time, UNICEF and WHO joined FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP in authoring *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, highlighting their joint commitment to needs assessments and analysis and reflecting the 2030 Agenda’s broad view on hunger and all forms of malnutrition.
59. WFP continued to use the latest information technology to increase the coverage, frequency, depth, quality and dissemination of joint needs assessments and analyses, resulting in better informed response analysis for effective and efficient programme delivery by national, regional and global partners.

Strengthening the capacity of national and local actors

60. In 2017, WFP and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) launched a capacity strengthening initiative to invest jointly in the capacity of selected Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies. The partnership is being piloted in Burundi, the Dominican Republic, Pakistan and the Sudan. Additional pilots are being prepared in the Pacific region and Zimbabwe.

61. This flagship localization initiative aims to demonstrate how WFP, IFRC and other partners can work together to build robust, sustainable national societies capable of delivering on their mandates and contributing to better local food security. The capacity investments in the national societies are context-specific and seek to strengthen the organizations as a whole rather than focusing on selected programme capacities. WFP has invested an initial USD 1 million in the initiative through two allocations from its Strategic Resource Allocation Committee.
62. In 2017, WFP developed new guidance on strengthening civil society capacity. The guidance highlights the benefits of taking a “whole of society” approach to zero hunger and identifies the country strategic planning process as a major opportunity to build capacity-strengthening partnerships with civil society. The guidance is aligned with the corporate approach to country capacity strengthening and will be rolled out to country offices in 2018 together with corporate guidance on managing NGO partnerships.

Accountability to affected populations

63. WFP’s approach to AAP is informed by IASC’s commitments. A WFP AAP guidance manual was issued in 2017 to support implementation of WFP’s AAP strategy, released at the same time, and three regional workshops were held to help country offices understand and operationalize AAP commitments.
64. Corporate reporting systems were adjusted to better capture AAP through indicators on information provision, consultations and complaint and feedback mechanisms. A corporate software solution for improved complaint management and referral systems is now in place. WFP increased its support for collective accountability systems through collaboration with the Communication & Community Engagement Initiative and the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, as well as with the global Food Security Cluster and the global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster. With UNFPA, WFP is co-chair of an inter-agency PSEA network in Iraq and co-leads the establishment and implementation of an inter-agency internally displaced person information centre in Afghanistan and a common complaint and feedback hotline in Lebanon.

Protection

65. The increase in large-scale emergencies and conflict have led to a growing number of protection crises. WFP continued to roll out programme guidance on protection, developing training and hosting three regional workshops. Dedicated in-country expertise improved the ability of WFP staff to address protection concerns. WFP engaged in a dialogue with Handicap International and RedR Australia in support of people with disabilities and continued collaboration through the Global Protection Cluster.

Natural hazards and climate change

66. Climate-related disasters have become more frequent and intense. WFP worked to mitigate the impacts of many climate disasters in 2017, such as in the Caribbean in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria. WFP provided logistics, air service and telecommunications support and food assistance to 629,000 people in Cuba and to thousands of affected people in Dominica, Haiti, Sint Marteen and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Other emergency responses were triggered in drought-affected areas of Somalia, where WFP reached 2.2 million people with a mix of food, vouchers and nutrition assistance; in Ethiopia, where 4.9 million people were assisted with emergency food and cash assistance and nutrition support for the most vulnerable; and in South Asia, where WFP distributed emergency food supplies to over 200,000 people in northwest Bangladesh and 198,080 people in Nepal.
67. With its partners, WFP continued to focus efforts to address the root causes and consequences of climate change. The growing impact of climate-related disasters on vulnerable and food-insecure communities and governments is highlighted in WFP’s new

climate change policy,² which articulates its contribution to national and global efforts to reduce the impact of climate change on hunger, such as by strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate-related hazards. The policy looks at the links between food security, nutrition and climate risks to support the development of national policies and programmes.

IV - Partnerships in focus

Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation

68. The Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation was established in October 2016 by Humanitarian Dialogue, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Médecins sans Frontières, UNHCR and WFP in response to the growing need to address access challenges arising from increasingly complex settings. The Centre seeks to foster a community of professionals engaged in frontline humanitarian negotiations across agencies and regions; promote critical reflections on the challenges and dilemmas of humanitarian negotiation; and develop a stronger analytical framework for effective practice in this area.
69. WFP has seconded a senior advisor to the Centre and takes part in forums that guide the design of its activities and services. WFP also conducted five country-level support missions³ for humanitarian teams to resolve access dilemmas and address potential challenges. WFP has yielded tangible dividends from the partnership by having over 100 staff participate in regional workshops. At the second annual meeting, WFP's Executive Director took part in a high-level segment on the connection between the political mitigation process and humanitarian negotiation, stressing the importance of gaining, maintaining and expanding principled humanitarian access in conflict settings. The Executive Director also attended the annual meeting of the Board of the strategic partnership on humanitarian negotiation, which discussed efforts to expand the operational capacity of the Centre.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

70. WFP's partnership with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has grown steadily since the signing of a memorandum of understanding in 2014. In 2017, the partnership expanded in a new way through a combination of global engagement with the fund and its partners, an increase in needs in challenging operating environments and greater confidence in the WFP supply chain to deliver non-food items. WFP delivered HIV/AIDS-related items in Burundi, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen for the Partnership for Supply Chain Management, one of the fund's partners. In 2018, at the request of fund, WFP will take over its in-country health supply chains in the Central African Republic, which will entail managing storage and delivery of products to 838 clinics. These partnerships are concrete examples of WFP working towards SDG 17 and illustrate how WFP's supply chain can be leveraged for health and humanitarian impact. This and other partnerships with health actors are expected to grow in 2018 and beyond as demand for WFP's "last-mile" support rises.

Private sector partnerships

71. Tableau Foundation, a highly respected leader in visual analytics with a strong record of supporting innovation around the world, is one of WFP's newest private sector partners. In 2017, the Tableau Foundation increased its support to WFP and the broader humanitarian community by facilitating real-time insights into food security monitoring. Tableau data visualizations have helped WFP to provide a better picture of the humanitarian situation in

² WFP/EB.1/2017/4-A/Rev.1*.

³ In Afghanistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Myanmar and Nigeria.

countries such as Yemen and Nigeria. Members of Tableau's user community regularly volunteer their time and talents to support WFP's disaster response efforts.

NGO partnerships

72. In 2017, WFP worked with 869 NGO partners, 730 of which were local or national organizations, and 139, international NGOs. In Nigeria, increased partnerships with NGOs helped WFP to assist over a million beneficiaries in 2017. During the year, WFP signed field-level agreements with 19 international and national NGOs: the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Medical Corps, Médecins Sans Frontières, ACF, the Danish Refugee Council, INTERSOS, CARE International, Save the Children International, Christian Aid, Mercy Corps, Secours Islamique France, Première Urgence Internationale and Cooperazione Internazionale, plus six national NGOs. WFP continued its strategic dialogue with NGO partners through the annual partnership consultation. Topics included the "new way of working" and United Nations development system reform, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the famine response.

Acronyms used in the document

AAP	accountability to affected populations
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PSEA	protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization