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## Summary report on the strategic evaluation of WFP's capacity to respond to emergencies (2011–2018)

### Executive summary

This strategic evaluation considers WFP's capacity to respond to emergencies since 2011. It covers the full range of emergencies that WFP responds to in terms of their location, scale and type. The evaluation is organized around the contribution that WFP capacity at three levels – enabling, organizational and individual – makes to the quality of its emergency responses.

The data considered for the evaluation were collected through an in-depth systematic review of evaluations and lessons learned documents, an extensive review of strategies, policies and guidance documents, six emergency case studies, visits to six country offices and the six WFP regional bureaux, and interviews with more than 400 internal and external stakeholders.

The evaluation period started after the significant shift in WFP's approach from food aid to food assistance and saw a significant change in the humanitarian context, with substantial growth in the number, complexity and duration of humanitarian crises.

The evaluation found, with regard to the enabling level, that policies were often developed in isolation from one another and were often not well communicated. The introduction of country strategic plans allowed approaches that better link emergency and development interventions, and the plans retain the flexibility to respond quickly to crises if the streamlining of systems continues. Structures have been adapted to strengthen performance, but effective knowledge management remains a challenge.

*In line with the Evaluation Policy (2016–2021) (WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev.1), to respect the integrity and independence of evaluation findings the editing of this report has been limited and as a result some of the language in it may not be fully consistent with the World Food Programme's standard terminology or editorial practices. Please direct any requests for clarification to the Director of Evaluation.*

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#### Focal points:

Ms A. Cook  
Director of Evaluation  
tel.: 066513-2030

Mr M. Reynolds  
Senior Evaluation Advisor  
email: michael.reynolds@wfp.org

At the organizational level WFP has developed more coordinated decision making processes and invested in mechanisms, technical guidance and tools, although gaps remain and systems to support their application and for monitoring still need further development.

There has been significant investment to increase capacity in cash-based transfers and some to improve the use of technology for data management and early warning systems, leading to stronger and more efficient responses; preparedness measures need strengthening and need to go beyond logistical preparations. WFP capacity in common service provision has made important contributions to the wider humanitarian response but internal systems and clarity regarding roles need attention because sectoral approaches to humanitarian crises are evolving.

WFP's contribution to connecting humanitarian, development and peace approaches is limited by a lack of practical guidance and tools and the limited availability and use of options for programming. Delays in converting policy commitments to resourcing and guidance for better accountability to affected populations limited the pace of scaling up systems to ensure accountability to affected populations.

At the individual level, WFP has significant gaps in key skills needed for emergency response; this imperils the quality of WFP's current responses as well as its ability to respond to future crises. Irregular and fragmented investment in building WFP access to skills and expertise has focused on short-term solutions to problems and has been limited mainly to WFP's surge mechanism, resulting in limitations in the size of the pool of experts available given the scale of the emergencies that WFP must respond to and its need to provide sustained, high quality responses. WFP has made significant progress in providing duty of care to its staff though this does not extend to all employees nor to partners.

The evaluation concludes that although WFP has enhanced its capacity to respond to the increasing number and scale of emergencies, it faces significant challenges in its desire to further enhance the quality of its responses to an increasingly diverse range of crises. The evaluation recommends urgent investment in a long-term approach that will enable sustained access to needed skills and expertise for all phases and types of responses. It also recommends investment in organizational capacity to ensure that responses are relevant and to enable effective corporate oversight of the quality of responses over time and across locations.

### **Draft decision\***

The Board takes note of the summary report on the strategic evaluation of WFP's capacity to respond to emergencies (2011–2018) (WFP/EB.1/2020/5-A) and management response (WFP/EB.1/2020/5-A/Add.1) and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

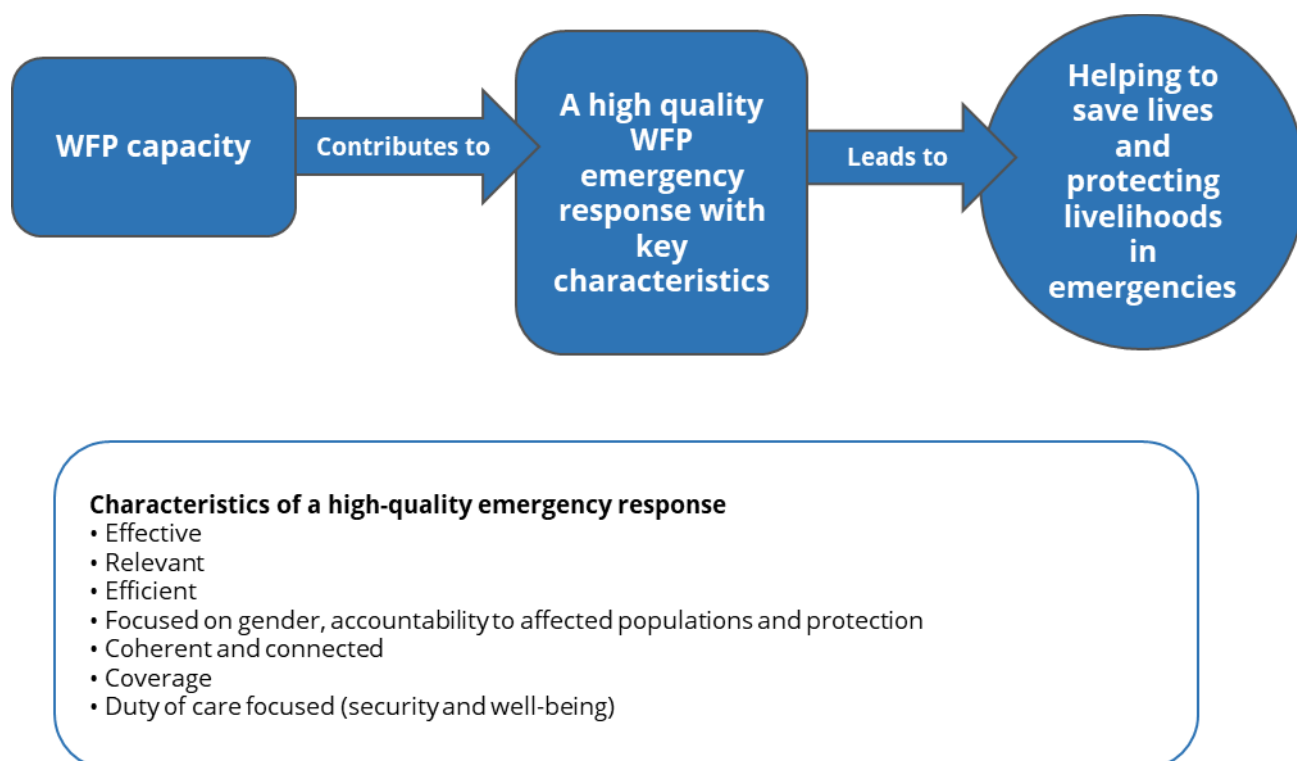
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\* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

## Introduction and evaluation features

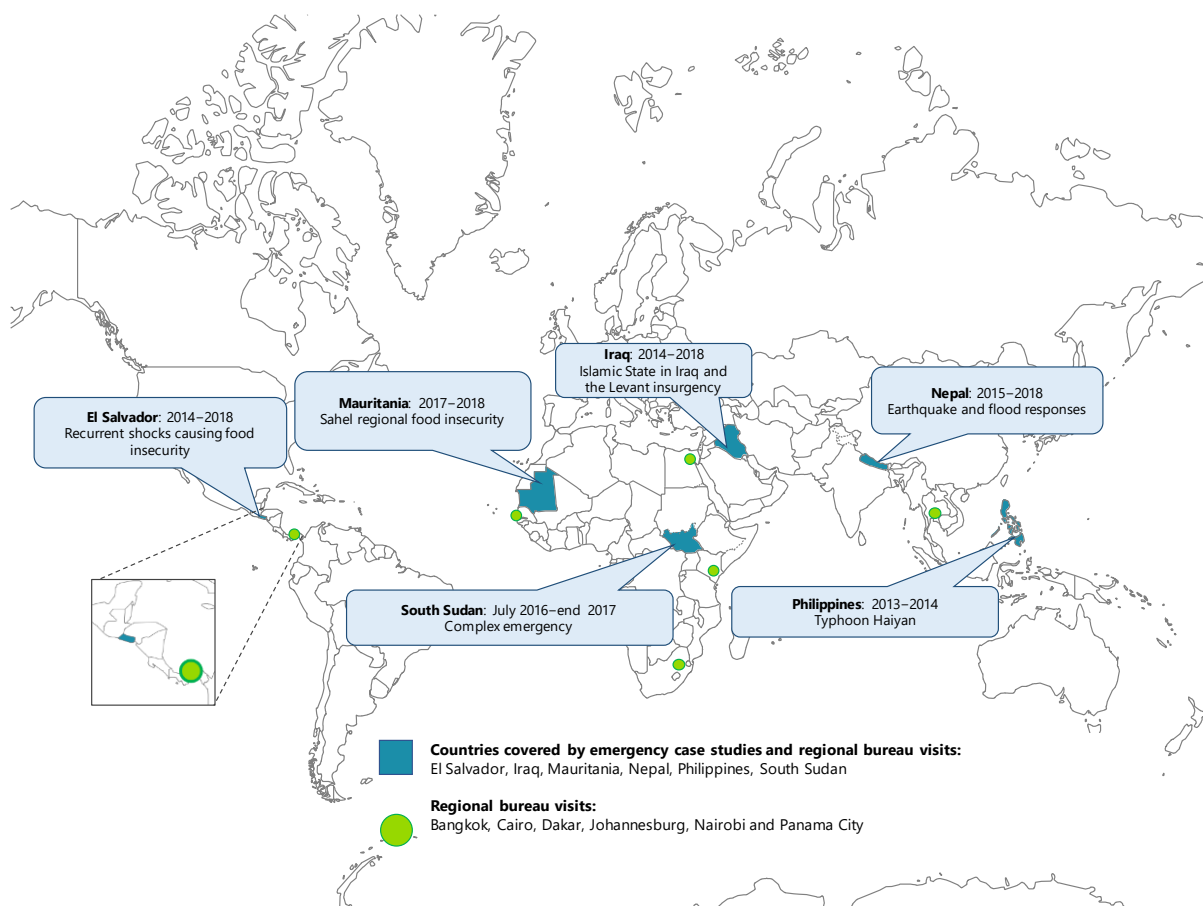
1. This strategic evaluation considers WFP's capacity to respond to emergencies from 2011–2018. It has the dual objectives of accountability and learning. It covers the full range of emergencies to which WFP responds. This includes L1, L2 and L3 emergencies. It also considers WFP preparedness for response, including immediate response and long-term response through to exit.
2. The evaluation is based on a logic model organized around the contribution that WFP capacity makes to the quality of its emergency responses. High quality responses are those that have the characteristics listed in figure 1. The evaluation considers WFP capacities at three levels: the enabling environment, the organization and the individual – which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing:
  - **Enabling environment** – WFP's corporate strategic plan and policy framework for guiding, supporting and directing WFP emergency responses, including the Integrated Road Map and knowledge framework.
  - **Organization** – business processes, guidance, tools, decision making processes and investments in organizational processes to support and enable the design and implementation of emergency responses, as well as learning at the organizational level.
  - **Individual** – needed skills, knowledge and performance provided through training, motivation and incentive systems, mechanisms for rapid access, and investment and learning processes aimed at ensuring that WFP has access to individuals with the skills required for emergency response.

**Figure 1: Evaluation framework**



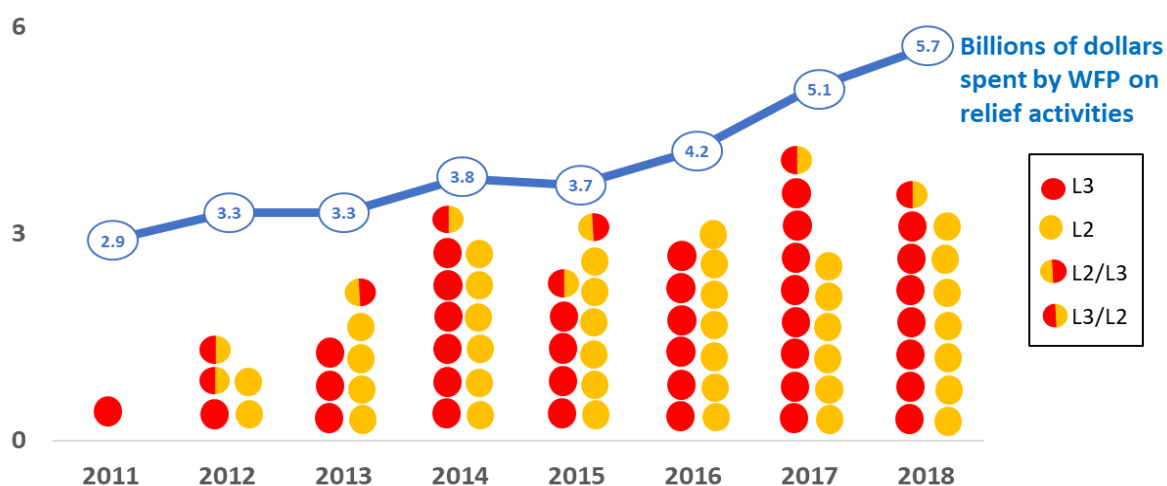
3. The data used in the evaluation were collected through an in-depth systematic review of evaluations and reports from lessons learned exercises covering major emergencies since 2011, an extensive review of strategies, policies and guidance documents, six emergency case studies (see figure 2), visits to six country offices and the six WFP regional bureaux and interviews with over 400 internal and external stakeholders.

**Figure 2: Emergency response case studies and evaluation visits**



## Humanitarian context and WFP emergency response

4. The humanitarian context has changed significantly during the period covered by the evaluation (2011–2018), which saw an increase in the number, complexity and duration of humanitarian crises, resulting in high levels of humanitarian need. A significant feature is an increase in conflict-related emergencies, and there is no indication that this trend will change in the near future.

**Figure 3: WFP expenditure on relief activities and number of L2 and L3 emergencies 2011–2018\***

\*Note that expenditure figures for relief include protracted responses.

Source: Data from WFP annual performance reports for 2011–2018.

5. The evaluation period started after WFP made a significant shift in its approach, from food aid to food assistance. An important trend has been the rapid increase in the scale of cash-based transfers (CBTs). There has also been divergence between ways of working, with some countries, particularly in middle-income countries in Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa, where there is more focus on WFP's enabling role, unlike in other regions where the focus remains on large-scale direct food assistance.
6. The evaluation period has seen several significant capacity developments in WFP intended to enhance its emergency responses. These include new emergency-related policies to complement earlier ones already part of the policy framework and from 2016 the roll-out of the Integrated Road Map framework. Organizational structural developments include continued support for the decentralization of WFP and changes in the structure of central divisions and departments. Significant operational developments also occurred, while new guidance and tools were developed in technical areas. WFP also invested in capacities at the individual level through training and in mechanisms for rapid access to individuals with key skills.

## Findings

### The enabling environment

7. **Policy framework.** WFP developed relevant new emergency-response-related policies, including on humanitarian protection, emergency preparedness, duty of care to employees and enterprise risk management. Older policies remain part of the guiding framework. However, most policies have been developed through standalone processes, resulting in some overlaps and competing priorities. There are also some gaps in the current overall policy framework, for instance to respond to the growing leadership of emergency responses by governments and in relation to technological developments. Policies are generally poorly communicated and there is limited guidance to enable their practical application across the wide range of contexts in which WFP operates, notably urban and middle-income contexts.

8. **Strategic planning framework.** Emergency response is consistently profiled in WFP strategic plans, although it is less visible in the most recent plan (covering 2017–2021), which lays more emphasis on WFP's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The development of country strategic plans (CSPs) allows a more integrated approach that offers the potential to link emergency responses and long-term solutions.
9. There were concerns that the new system would be more time-consuming and less flexible and would slow WFP emergency responses. However, WFP's flexible approach (e.g. using waivers), together with a commitment to learning lessons to streamline procedures, including in the development of new guidance to support revision processes, indicate that CSPs should facilitate agility in emergency response. The use of criteria and processes to enable the rapid revision of CSPs is not yet systematic, however. The impact of the use of waivers for certain standard procedures such as the gender and age marker on other characteristics of a high-quality response, such as gender responsiveness, is also less clear.
10. WFP policies and CSPs make it possible for WFP emergency responses to be coherent with the activities of other humanitarian and development actors as well as with national governments' priorities and emergency response approaches. There remains some potential tension between WFP's striving for coherence with government priorities on the one hand and adherence to humanitarian principles on the other.
11. **Structural framework.** Structural changes in WFP have achieved positive results contributing to more integrated and efficient emergency responses. Regional bureau structures have evolved in relation to regional strategic priorities, and these priorities are becoming more diverse. However, the frequency of and rationale for headquarters changes, as well as growth in the number of headquarters staff, contrast with the move towards increased decentralization. Moreover, the lack of continuity at headquarters causes confusion in the field and a sense of distance from headquarters.
12. **Knowledge management framework.** WFP has implemented measures responding to an acknowledged need for improved knowledge management. While these have resulted in an impressive library of documented lessons in emergency response, their application has been inconsistent. Significantly, a two-year investment made to develop a knowledge management strategy completed in 2017 remains without resources. This seems to reflect the ongoing low prioritization of knowledge management in an organization with a culture more focused on action.

#### **Organizational capacity: components of the organizational framework**

13. **Decision making for emergency response.** WFP has strengthened its decision making processes for emergency response, enabling more coordinated decision making across the organization. However, strengthened risk management systems create tensions and challenges for WFP's ability to respond quickly to emergencies while at the same time meeting the expectations of donors. At times risk management systems are relaxed to enable operational efficiency, but this approach is not systematic, and its impact on other characteristics of a high quality response is unclear.
14. WFP responds to constraints in funding shortfalls by reducing rations or activities that are less urgent as well as by reducing the geographical range and operational scope of its responses. This approach yields mixed results in terms of coverage of affected populations. It also reduces short-term effectiveness as well as contributions to long-term resilience. These impacts are not tracked systematically.

15. WFP capacity for geographical targeting was generally good; its ability to focus targeting, however, was constrained by the drive to reach as many people as possible quickly. There is often limited involvement of partners and affected populations in the development of targeting approaches, although there are positive examples of community-based targeting systems and cooperation with specialist organizations, such as those focused on people with disabilities and women.
16. **Mechanisms, technical guidance and tools.** Developments in WFP advance financing mechanisms and related facilities have yielded positive results in terms of the timeliness and cost of responses, particularly for slow-onset and protracted crises. However, their potential contribution is at times constrained by illiquidity, which is exacerbated by limited funding for some crises and, in some cases, a lack of country office planning.
17. WFP has developed technical guidance and tools in areas identified as priorities to support the design and implementation of high-quality programmes, but field-level awareness and consistent use of guidance is not strong. The use of guidance and tools that are flexible enough to be adaptable to different contexts is good, but it increases reliance on teams' access to experts to assist in the customization of responses. Guidance is often hard to locate, lengthy and in some cases quite theoretical. Difficulties in applying guidance and other tools can contribute to shortcomings in the quality of responses. The most valuable guidance for the field is technical expertise but it is not always available due to individuals' skills gaps.
18. WFP has developed technological tools and ways of working to reach affected people in insecure locations, which combined with high level skills for negotiating access, which is an urgent and growing need, have achieved good results in terms of beneficiary coverage. Yet, while WFP has capacity to reach affected people in insecure areas, it faces difficulties in responding to varied needs, particularly in the early stages of responses and with regard to evolving needs in protracted emergencies.
19. **Cooperating partners.** WFP has widened its range of partnerships, which in turn has enhanced its ability to reach affected people during emergency responses. It strengthened guidance to address identified partnership issues but further development is needed with regard to efficiency in contracting, partner participation in programme design, capacity development and managing risk. WFP often transfers risk to partners in insecure contexts, and there is widespread discomfort with this approach among WFP employees. It should be noted that WFP duty of care policies do not cover cooperating partners.
20. **Monitoring.** Corporate systems for monitoring WFP's overall emergency response performance focus on the efficiency of responses. Existing initiatives aim to broaden their focus to include the cross-cutting issues of gender responsiveness, protection and accountability. However, oversight of the effectiveness of WFP emergency response is constrained by the corporate results framework's focus on WFP contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as by data quality. These shortcomings constrain the assessment of the effectiveness, relevance and impact of WFP responses, as well as the ability to make comparisons between responses and over time.

### **Organizational capacity: elements of an emergency response**

21. **Cash-based transfers.** Significant investment in capacity relevant to CBTs enabled their use on a large-scale as a response modality as well as WFP's ability to respond to risk management challenges. Beneficiary feedback indicates the appropriateness of using CBTs when market conditions are suitable. Evidence shows the importance at the country level of preparedness for efficient CBT scale-up, which is an ongoing need. Some systems developed are more appropriate to large-scale, protracted crisis responses.

22. **Data management.** The scale of data collected by WFP together with the rapid evolution of data management technology and ways of working pose challenges for WFP with regard to data sharing as part of cooperation with governments and other agencies; country offices require support if they are to manage such sharing effectively.
23. **Preparedness and early warning.** Investment and developments in WFP's preparedness for response, including WFP early warning systems, have improved the efficiency of responses in terms of time and cost. WFP has continued to develop its early warning systems at the corporate, regional and country levels. However, more limited investment in sustained preparedness planning beyond logistical preparation limits WFP's capacity to respond quickly with a relevant response. There are also limitations in tools that support planning and preparedness for WFP response, as well as in employee capacity to undertake and use analysis. The lack of an updated framework for WFP emergency response limits the strength of cross-organizational planning and the development of capacity to meet response needs and WFP ambitions.
24. **Nexus approaches.** WFP policy and strategic commitments to maximize WFP's potential contribution to approaches connecting humanitarian, development and peace work are limited by lack of practical guidance and tools and the limited use of programme options. Other constraints include donor perceptions that WFP does not have this type of expertise, the range of partners and partnership management systems led by short-term agreement, potential overlap with other organizations' mandates and an organizational focus on outputs that build immediate food security rather than the outcome of long-term community resilience. There is increasing interest in linking with national social protection systems, which are highly relevant to WFP's role in responses, through working closely with government systems. However, this can present challenges to humanitarian principles in some contexts.
25. **Inter-agency contributions and coherence.** WFP capacity in common service provision (including in the logistics, food security and emergency telecommunications clusters, aviation and the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot) has made a significant contribution to humanitarian responses, enabling efficiency and coverage, and includes new ways of deploying WFP's capacities (e.g. in the health sector during Ebola responses). Inter-agency cooperation is evolving towards single-platform CBT initiatives as well as multi-purpose CBT interventions. WFP's contribution to the United Nations reform process has been appreciated, along with the organization's ongoing leading role in inter-agency dialogue on humanitarian response. New developments in the humanitarian sector highlight the need for guidance to support new ways of working including in relation to WFP cost recovery, and clarity regarding WFP's evolving role in inter-agency approaches.
26. **Accountability to affected populations.** WFP has developed a practical approach to accountability to affected populations (AAP), but significant delays between making commitments and developing guidance have hindered the pace of scale-up, resulting in regular findings of shortcomings in consultation with affected populations, which indicate that while progress is positive WFP still has some way to go to meet the commitments it made in 2011.

### Individual capacity

27. **Access to individual skills, knowledge and experience.** WFP successfully scaled up and allocated its workforce to support emergency responses, particularly in the first stages of large-scale L3 emergencies. A range of formal and informal mechanisms enabled this, with the prevalence of informal systems reflecting the preference of WFP senior personnel for more control over who is deployed.



28. There have been skills gaps, however, particularly beyond the initial wave of deployments as well as in smaller scale emergencies. WFP does not track gaps in emergency response skills or wider human resource needs. For example, the evaluation found that there was a shortage of emergency coordinators. It also found shortages of other staff in some core technical areas, including nutrition, CBTs and cross-cutting issues such as gender, protection and accountability as well as in expertise relevant to responses in urban environments and resilience issues. WFP's ability to keep individuals with these skills throughout protracted crises is a challenge. Country offices were stretched also in their L1 response role in the case of responses that were extended or where they dealt with emergencies that were unusual in the region.
29. Factors influencing skill gaps go beyond the availability of employees with skills and expertise within WFP and available to WFP (e.g. through partnerships). Continuing areas of concern include high turnover rates of staff and slow human resource procedures that hinder rapid scale-up and continuity in the staffing of responses. Other significant factors include variable willingness on the part of employees to deploy, unwillingness of country directors to release staff for temporary duty assignments and governments' limitations on team composition, including in terms of nationality.
30. The availability of skills has had a considerable impact on the quality of responses. Given the evidence of limited use of technical guidance and reliance on the availability of expertise for high-quality responses, these gaps and delays are significant. The overall trend of high turnover is a constraint on plans to grow internal emergency response individual capacity. In addition, the size of WFP's permanent pool of long-term staff has decreased relative to the increased scale of emergency responses.
31. **Investment in individual capacity.** Substantial investment in training and initiatives to build skills reflect WFP awareness of skills gaps, but there is mixed evidence regarding their effectiveness in improving emergency response capacity. A key issue is the limited link between formal learning and support for the practical application of new skills. There are initiatives across WFP to increase skills but over time they have not resulted in the building of a national cadre and international staff ready to serve effectively in emergency responses. Training initiatives are often disjointed and do not result in cumulative learning.
32. WFP's efforts to enhance its access to expertise has focused on surge mechanisms. These have had some positive results but proven insufficient to meet all emergency response needs across stages and types of emergency responses, which are influenced by wider human resource systems. Moreover, overall investment in building individual capacity for emergency response has been irregular and not sustained. Operational gaps and challenges are often addressed through solutions such as employees "double-hatting" or extended use of temporary duty assignments; such approaches do not necessarily address long-term challenges and may have knock-on effects on other parts of the organization that are not tracked.
33. **Duty of care.** WFP has made significant progress in meeting its duty of care to employees, keeping abreast of developments in operational contexts, maintaining compliance with United Nations security policies and guidance and creating a wellness unit in 2015 that focuses on employee health and working conditions. Trends in the scale and complexity of emergencies highlight the ongoing need for capacity in wellness and security.
34. A challenge is the tension between the duty of care and enabling access to affected populations and coverage of WFP's responses. Some challenges relate to contracting practices that fail to provide some categories of WFP personnel with appropriate security and health coverage. WFP's efforts to meet its duty of care is visible across the organization; there are inconsistencies, however, with security awareness more embedded in organizational processes and culture than staff wellness.

## Conclusions

35. **Conclusion 1:** WFP has increased its capacity to respond to the increased number and scale of emergency responses over the past decade. Significant investments, organizational culture and employee commitment to reach and assist affected people have supported the increased scale of WFP responses. However, capacities, notably at the individual level, are over-stretched, which poses urgent challenges for WFP's future responses in terms of its ability to respond with high quality, relevant and effective programmes, including in relation to small-scale and protracted crises.
36. **Conclusion 2:** WFP has invested in surge mechanisms, training and duty of care for employees as part of capacity development with some success. But constraints to developing and sustaining access to needed skills and expertise across emergency contexts and phases of responses risk undermining the quality of emergency responses. Needs in relation to duty of care also remain high. The complexity of emergency contexts and the broadening range of approaches and roles being undertaken by WFP in emergency responses also demand a wider range of skills than those typically possessed by traditionally recruited employees. This requires a sustained and long-term approach to building capacity within WFP and access to skills externally.
37. **Conclusion 3:** WFP has developed capacity to deal with the growing complexity of emergency responses and to respond to external trends. The organization has laid a strong foundation to support a more integrated approach to food insecurity that more closely links immediate response and long-term approaches in humanitarian and development programming. However, the lack of an organization-wide emergency response framework based on WFP policies, analysis of trends and assumptions about the intended scale and scope of WFP responses constrain linked-up organization-wide planning for the development of WFP capacities. Importantly, the broadening range of roles that WFP is undertaking, and the complexity of the emergencies to which it responds, means that WFP requires staff with a broad range of capacities; enabling WFP to find such staff in a timely manner will require significant investment. If this is not possible then a clear and strategic prioritization of WFP's roles and approaches will be necessary.
38. **Conclusion 4:** When confronting competing priorities, WFP consistently prioritizes efficiency – in terms of speed and cost – and coverage – in terms of numbers reached. Investment, notably in advance financing mechanisms and logistics preparation, has improved the efficiency of responses but there is a need for more attention to other aspects of preparedness to ensure that responses are relevant. Areas for capacity development include strengthened contextual and trend analysis and relationship development with partners, governments and others, including in countries without a WFP presence; these depend on capacity at the regional bureau and country office levels.
39. **Conclusion 5:** WFP's contribution to sector-wide responses is highly valued and contributes to inter-agency efficiency and the enhanced coverage of responses. WFP capacity to fill roles for the common services it provides (including in cluster coordination, aviation and through the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot) effectively has been made possible by the allocation of dedicated funds for support roles, specialist partners and a focus on learning and improvement within a culture of innovation. Evolving roles, such as in health emergencies and integrated responses to vulnerability, along with the United Nations reform process, mean that new guidance and clarification are and will be needed. WFP can also play a strong role in the humanitarian sector and the United Nations system to ensure that humanitarian space and principles are safeguarded.

40. **Conclusion 6:** WFP invested in its results frameworks, notably introducing some indicators to facilitate greater focus on the performance of emergency responses. However, limitations in WFP corporate monitoring frameworks and systems constrain oversight of the effectiveness of its responses over time, across responses and across all quality criteria. Learning platforms that allow access and greater use of information and knowledge are also lacking.

## Recommendations

41. The recommendations for action below are of equal priority and should be implemented as an integrated package to achieve the best results.

### Preparedness for emergency response: individual level (conclusions 1 and 2)

**Recommendation 1: Significantly increase and maintain investment in the scale and pace of the development of long-term, sustainable human resources systems to ensure sustained access to skills needed in emergency responses across emergency contexts, roles and response phases.**

**Responsibility:** Director of Emergencies and Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Resource Management Department, Human Resources Division and regional bureaux.

**Deadline:** 30 June 2021

- Develop a detailed capacity development plan and strategy for employee skills and expertise that is designed to meet the operational needs for emergency response (based on the current and intended range of WFP response options) and skills identified as key for emergency response. Include:
  - Leadership skills (e.g. for emergency coordinators) as well as specialist and generalist emergency response skills needed in multi-functional teams (i.e. staff who are expected to have emergency response and capacity development or other skills for long-term roles).
  - National and international staff in the plan.
  - Create a coherent framework to bring together the range of training initiatives and in particular ensure links between classroom/online training and practical support in the field for the application of new skills. Provide guidance to staff on training and development opportunities that will allow them to progress in emergency response.
  - Bring together the wide range of formal and informal systems for the deployment of personnel for emergency responses (as recommended in the “Rapid Response Workforce Planning” report<sup>1</sup>) to operate a comprehensive deployment system supported by greater investment from the programme support and administrative budget.
- Invest in building a WFP pool of emergency response skilled staff, including through systems to enable country offices to recruit long-term staff.
- Establish an evidence base of the true costs and benefits of the effects of long-term transfer of WFP personnel (e.g. through temporary duty assignments longer than one month) from their duty stations to support emergency responses (include a focus on small country offices) to support evidence-based decisions on human resource options for emergency response.

<sup>1</sup> C.R. Bosch and G. Shaver. 2017. *Rapid Response Workforce Planning report*.

**Recommendation 2: Build on current momentum and invest in strengthening measures to meet the duty of care across the organization, including with regard to the wellness, safety and security of employees, and to build awareness and understanding of relevant cross-organizational responsibilities.**

**Responsibility:** Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Human Resources Division, Staff Wellness Division, Security Division and Gender Office.

**Deadline:** 30 June 2021

- Develop a duty of care framework for emergency response contexts, including gender markers for tracking progress and any differential experiences of the duty of care. Promote duty of care as a shared responsibility across teams.
- Ensure more investment to increase the proportion of WFP security employees on staff contracts to facilitate continuity and the internal development of crucial skills.
- Ensure that both security and wellness competencies are included in senior managers' job descriptions and undertake assessments using the Performance and Competency Enhancement tool.

### Preparedness for emergency response: organizational level (conclusions 3 and 4)

**Recommendation 3: Significantly strengthen WFP emergency preparedness through context-specific preparation and sustained liquidity of advance financing and commodity management mechanisms, including for pre-emptive responses.**

**Responsibility:** Director of Emergencies and Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Budget and Programming Division, Finance and Treasury Division, country offices and regional bureaux.

**Deadline:** 30 September 2020

- Better define the institutional preparedness framework for WFP, governments and partners.
- Task regional bureaux and country offices with developing a plan for WFP's own preparedness for response as part of CSP processes in countries identified as potential hotspots (i.e., with potential emergencies in the next three years – including those with and without a WFP regional presence). Ensure corporate support for the process with relevant tools and quality assurance.
- Develop the plans through in-country consultations to build response strategies based on context analysis, consultation with the government, regional emergency response bodies, civil society and potential partners for implementation across all potential programme components and modalities.
- Ensure that institutional systems and arrangements, e.g. with service providers, are updated.
- Put in place a system to safeguard the liquidity of advance financing mechanisms to enable the swift release of funds, including from the Immediate Response Account and the Global Commodity Management Facility, including for pre-emptive action and action on early warning triggers.

### The enabling environment for emergency response (conclusion 3)

**Recommendation 4: Develop a consolidated framework for emergency response to support planning for capacity development and the implementation of WFP responses across contexts reflecting the organization's level of ambition for the quality of responses and the range of WFP roles.**

**Responsibility:** Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Security Division, Supply Chain Operations Division, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Human Resources Division and regional bureaux.

**Deadline:** 30 September 2020

- Bring together the existing emergency-related policies into a coherent framework and link them to implementation guidance that includes clarification of terminology for emergency, crisis and humanitarian response and supports planning for contextualized responses.
- Use the framework to develop business plans for investment in WFP emergency response capacity at the corporate, regional bureau and country office levels.
- Include updated assumptions regarding the scale and types of emergencies that WFP will respond to and capacities needed for each type and stage of response, based on trends in emergencies and WFP's ambitions in response, maintaining the prioritization of flexibility for a customized approach to different contexts.
- Make explicit the criteria for waivers of any decision-making procedures, including in activation protocols and CSP revision, and actively disseminate lessons so that CSPs enable relevant and flexible responses.

### Organizational capacity for context-specific responses (conclusions 3 and 4)

**Recommendation 5: Pursue more equitable approaches to partnerships to include improved and consistent risk management of partners in insecure contexts as well as partner participation in response design and capacity building.**

**Responsibility:** NGO Partnerships Unit, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Logistics Cluster, Food Security Cluster, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, country offices and regional bureaux.

**Deadline:** 30 September 2020

- Identify partners in high-risk countries and establish agreements for cooperation during responses. Ensure that partner selection enables WFP to reach at-risk geographic areas and marginalized vulnerable groups.
- Establish a clear process to be used systematically across country offices on risk management in respect of partners' security, including guidance on what risks should and should not be transferred to partners, acceptable levels of risk and a process for determining them.
- Put in place systems to increase partner participation in the design and adaptation of emergency responses. Simplify field level agreements for emergencies.

**Recommendation 6: Intensify investment in organizational and staff capacity strengthening to ensure that WFP can operate through a broad range of roles in increasingly complex settings and profoundly changing environments.**

**Responsibility:** Director of Emergencies, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Budget and Programming Division and regional bureaux.

**Deadline:** 31 December 2020

- Develop policy-level guidance to support country office and regional bureau emergency response preparation and implementation in contexts with strong government leadership to guide the development of WFP strategy, roles and capacity development.
- Increase practical support for country offices in applying WFP approaches and guidance in various contexts and stages of response, such as through the development of an online tool for application of guidance in various contexts linked to expertise (e.g. expert adviser from within WFP, community of practice). Provide support for its use through focused webinars and on-the-spot mentoring (in-country or through training and development secondments) and ensure that guidance is simplified and accessible.
- Consult with country offices, with special focus on small country offices, regarding the utility of corporate tools including SCOPE and data analysis and mapping to inform revisions and any new tools (if required) to support small-scale emergency responses (usually L1).
- Develop dedicated internal expertise to deal with increasing field requests for advice on data protection, management and privacy, particularly in relation to close work with other agencies and governments.
- Establish targets and track satisfaction levels regarding communication between headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices to identify trends or needs with regard to improving communication (e.g. questions in the global staff survey). Ensure any corporate initiatives include the full participation or potentially leadership of regional bureaux and country offices and involve headquarters.

**Recommendation 7: Significantly strengthen support for the practical application and mainstreaming of a principled approach and for the centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations and gender responsiveness in emergency response.**

**Responsibility:** Director of Programme – Humanitarian Development Division, in collaboration with regional bureaux, Human Resources Division, Emergencies Operations Division and Gender Office.

**Deadline:** 30 September 2020

- Ensure that senior managers and staff at other levels are supported through accessible guidance, training and on-the-spot advice and demonstrate capacity to navigate tensions related to humanitarian principles if experiencing political interference in humanitarian assistance. Invest in hands-on and easy-to-use protection-related guidance and other tools for achieving consistency across emergency responses and contexts. Increase the emergency response focus in gender-related guidance. Ensure that gender, protection and accountability expertise are present from the outset of a response by building gender, protection and AAP profiles into emergency response rosters and including them in the first wave deployments as well as measures to ensure that these issues are seen as cross-cutting responsibilities of the team.
- Ensure that capacity and understanding in respect of protection, AAP and humanitarian principles are included in field-level agreements alongside gender, with explicit related principles and clear processes that WFP expects its partners to implement. Scale-up the establishment of complaint and feedback mechanisms across all operations through the provision of appropriately skilled employees, use of practical guidance and investment to enable operations to reach minimum standards. Increase expertise and the use of communication technology for accountability to affected populations through the production and promotion of practical guidance on complaint and feedback mechanisms and the broader use of communication tools such as social media, mass media (radio, television), text messages and other emerging methods as part of accountability systems.

### Inter-agency cooperation (conclusion 5)

**Recommendation 8: Continue WFP's meaningful engagement with United Nations development system reform to ensure that humanitarian space is safeguarded and clarify WFP roles in inter-agency collaboration within new and evolving shared approaches in humanitarian response. Develop WFP internal systems for sustaining support for new forms of partnership in inter-agency cooperation.**

**Responsibility:** Deputy Executive Director with collaboration of Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Senior Director Operations, Supply Chain Operations Division, Emergencies Operations Division, Rome-Based Agency and Committee on World Food Security Division, Budget and Programming Division, Logistics Cluster, Food Security Cluster and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster.

**Deadline:** 30 September 2020

- Take an active role in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee regarding the clarity of individual agency mandates in all phases of emergency responses and the implications for cooperation of:
  - single platform and multi-purpose cash approaches
  - the operationalization of nexus ways of working in emergency response to enable cross-organization guidance to country offices and operations.
- Establish systematic cost recovery approaches for the expanding range of common services provided by WFP, including through partnerships with health-focused organizations, provision of engineering as well as ongoing logistics and emergency telecommunications cluster support.
- Ensure adequate resourcing (financial and HR) for effective WFP-led and co-led cluster and partnership roles, including in new forms of cooperation such as with regard to health.

### Monitoring of emergency response (conclusion 6)

**Recommendation 9: Strengthen the monitoring of emergency response performance by tracking results over time. Specifically, enable the comparison of responses by adapting WFP's monitoring framework, regularly analysing results and linking findings to planning for capacity needs.**

**Responsibility:** Director of Performance Management and Reporting Division, in consultation with Budget and Programming Division, Emergencies Operations Division and Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division.

**Deadline:** 30 June 2020

- Define success in emergency response and establish monitoring and evaluation processes and guidance to track success across emergencies. Include qualitative data questions to facilitate assessment of issues like relevance and responsiveness of operations to various needs of populations. Report on the assessment of these issues annually to enable the tracking of trends over time and comparison across responses. Monitor and report coverage of WFP assistance more systematically and in more detail through the establishment of operational monitoring systems at response and corporate levels in order to track:
  - proportion of those in need of WFP assistance reached;
  - proportion of planned assistance actually provided per beneficiary;
  - regularity of assistance provided;
  - effects of reductions in assistance in the short-term and medium-term;
  - gender responsiveness of operations.

The resulting reporting ability will enable a more complete picture of emergency response coverage and effectiveness.
- Ensure that monitoring is owned and focused on support to country offices to support response adaptation and corporate oversight.

### Learning and knowledge management (conclusion 6)

**Recommendation 10: Increase organization-wide access to and use of emergency response lessons learned by strengthening knowledge platforms and providing incentives for the use of lessons.**

**Responsibility:** Director of Emergencies, in collaboration with Programme and Policy Development Department, Supply Chain Operations Division, Budget and Programming Division, Innovation and Change Management Division.

**Deadline:** 30 September 2020

- Create a user-friendly knowledge platform that combines access to customized products for specific responses that communicate relevant lessons for decision makers and access to people with expertise and experience. Ensure broad access to the knowledge platform, provide incentives for its use and link it to capacity development programmes and frameworks.
- Implement and regularly report on progress in the implementation of the knowledge management strategy and on the application of lessons.



**Acronyms**

AAP	accountability to affected populations
CBT	cash-based transfers
CSP	country strategic plan
IRM	Integrated Road Map