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## Update on the WFP disability inclusion road map (2020–2021)

The present document gives an overview of progress made on WFP's disability inclusion road map (2020–2021), the existing gaps, challenges and areas in which progress is lagging, as well as WFP's next steps and forward-looking vision beyond 2021. The main purpose of the document is to ask for an extension of the existing road map by one year.

### Draft decision\*

The Board takes note of the update on the WFP disability inclusion road map (2020–2021) (WFP/EB.2/2021/4-E) and approves a one-year extension of the road map through the end of 2022.

### Introduction

1. WFP's disability inclusion road map (2020–2021), along with its resource and implementation plan, was approved by the Executive Board at its 2020 second regular session. In response, the Governments of Australia and Finland committed USD 2.7 million to a dedicated trust fund for the purpose of kick starting WFP's work on disability inclusion. The road map is linked to the [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy \(UNDIS\)](#), and WFP has a commitment to report annually to the Secretary-General on progress made against the 15 UNDIS indicators relating to leadership and strategic planning, inclusiveness, programming and organizational culture.

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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.

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#### Focal point:

Mr D. Kaatrud  
Director  
Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division  
tel.: 066513-2203

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2. General observations and trends since the approval of the road map include the following:
- Since 2019 WFP has taken positive steps towards mainstreaming disability inclusion into its long-term commitments. Disability inclusion is referred to throughout the strategic plan, the corporate results framework (CRF) and guidance on country level programming from country strategic plans to annual country reports. Specific links between disability inclusion and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review are embedded in both the strategic plan and the CRF, ensuring that WFP works towards system-wide reporting on disability inclusion.
  - WFP has laid the foundations for real and meaningful change on disability inclusion in the last year 18 months. Guidance on accessibility, the inclusion of disability within protection and accountability to affected populations policy and programming, piloting of disability evidence collection and sustained efforts by leadership, capacity building and communications teams to advocate and raise awareness of disability inclusion have been crucial first steps to driving systemic change.
  - Progress at headquarters has been replicated in regional and country level programming through regional initiatives and pilot projects. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific disability inclusion workplan, pilots on data collection across WFP operations and country office initiatives on inclusion of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in programming are promising steps forward.
  - Coordination with other United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations has contributed to WFP's efforts to address the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in a strategic and harmonized way. This is done through WFP's work within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee disability reference group; the working group on strengthening data collection for humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; the UNDIS focal points network; the advisory group to the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds; the food security cluster protection task force; and collaboration with the United Nations Development Coordination Office and the other Rome-based agencies.
  - WFP has leveraged partnerships to increase its technical expertise on disability inclusion. WFP works with Trinity College Dublin to create an evidence base for disability inclusive programming and more recently with CBM International, which provides technical assistance to all WFP operations through its disability inclusion Helpdesk.
  - Finally, continued coordination within WFP between protection, accountability to affected populations, gender, human resources and people policy teams has led to disability inclusion becoming part of broader conversations on equality, diversity and inclusion.

## Progress, gaps, challenges and opportunities

### Progress

3. In 2019, WFP reported “missing” on each of the 15 indicators of the UNDIS.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the support received from Finland and Australia, by the end of 2021 WFP expects to exceed expectations with regard to one indicator, meet them with regard to five, approach them with regard to eight and report “missing” with regard to one.<sup>2</sup> This shows significant progress. Some positive examples are in leadership and institutional set-up, where WFP has invested in building internal expertise (through the disability inclusion working group and steering committee chaired by the Deputy Executive Director) and championing disability inclusion to ensure that it is mainstreamed into the organization in the future. Progress with regard to other areas, including procurement, employment and reasonable accommodation, is also noted, and is highlighted in the [Secretary-General’s 2020 UNDIS report](#).

UNDIS Indicators	2019 Scores	2020 Scores	2021 Scores (Projections)
Indicator 1: Leadership	Missing	Meets	Meets
Indicator 2: Strategic Planning and Management	Missing	Missing	Meets
Indicator 3: Disability-Specific Policy/Strategy	Missing	Meets	Meets
Indicator 4: Institutional Set-Up	Missing	Exceeds	Exceeds
Indicator 5: Consultation with Persons with Disabilities	Missing	Missing	Approaches
Indicator 6: Accessibility	Missing	Missing	Approaches
Indicator 6.1: Accessibility of Conferences and Events	Missing	Missing	Missing
Indicator 7: Reasonable Accommodation	Missing	Missing	Approaches
Indicator 8: Procurement	Missing	Missing	Approaches
Indicator 9: Programmes and Projects	Missing	Missing	Approaches
Indicator 10: Evaluation	Missing	Missing	Approaches
Indicator 11: Country Programme Documents	Missing	Missing	Approaches
Indicator 12: Joint Initiatives	Missing	Approaches	Meets
Indicator 13: Employment	Missing	Missing	Approaches
Indicator 14: Capacity Development	Missing	Approaches	Approaches
Indicator 15: Communications	Missing	Missing	Meets

4. Throughout 2020 and 2021, disability inclusion has been highly visible, with the development of several guidance documents in areas such as nutrition, procurement and programmes. Notably, assessments of accessibility have resulted in the development of “Procedures and Standards for the Inclusive Accessibility of the Built Environment” and an actionable plan for improving WFP’s digital accessibility. These are hosted on WFP’s internal information and knowledge management platform on disability inclusion - the main resource portal for WFP employees and one of the most viewed pages in the programmatic areas. In terms of knowledge and information sharing, regional webinars on disability data

<sup>1</sup> UNDIS was launched by the Secretary-General in June 2019. The rating system of the [UNDIS’ accountability framework](#) has five levels: “exceeds” requirements, “meets requirements”, “approaches” requirements, “missing” and “not applicable”. The “missing” rating is used when the performance indicator is relevant but the entity being reviewed does not “approach” the requirements. The ratings enable United Nations entities to self-assess and report on their standing with respect to each indicator. Ultimately, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General assesses and assigns the final ratings for each entity on a yearly basis, reflected in an entity-wide report.

<sup>2</sup> See the table above for an overview of ratings for 2019/2020 and projections for 2021. The indicator on which WFP expects to report “missing” is 6.1, “Accessibility of Conferences and Events”, a baseline assessment for which will be conducted in the first quarter of 2022, based on information and communications technology and built environment assessments that were conducted in 2021.

disaggregation and the use of the Washington Group questions on disability have been conducted and facilitated by the Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division, the disability inclusion team Trinity College Dublin researchers and have reached a good number of colleagues worldwide.

5. Likewise, specific divisions (those dealing with cash-based transfers, emergency operations and NGO partnerships) have held sessions on disability inclusion, reflecting the growing interest in the area. Throughout August and September 2021, training on making the procurement process accessible was conducted in English and French, reaching more than 150 WFP practitioners. To improve the accessibility of goods and services, in September 2021 WFP entered into a long-term agreement with a service provider that requisitioners can use to have their requirements reviewed and made accessible.<sup>3</sup> Finally, a vendor has been brought on board to develop a general package of disability inclusion learning models and training for all WFP employees.
6. Another sensitization initiative, which received positive feedback, was the development of WFP's first podcast on disability inclusion, "Beyond Labels", which showcases first-hand experiences and personal stories of WFP colleagues who have connections to disability. In a similar vein, an employee-led affinity group of employees with connections to disability will be launched on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December) and will take the form of a confidential platform for exchange, providing space for meaningful interactions and the voicing of concerns, challenges and opportunities of WFP employees and their family members and dependents with disabilities.
7. In September 2021, WFP and the CBM Global Inclusion Advisory Group launched a disability inclusion helpdesk at a meeting of the disability inclusion working group through the release of a [video](#), which has been followed up with regional information sessions throughout October and November. The aim of the helpdesk is to provide free, timely and tailored advice to all WFP employees around the world on questions related to disability inclusive programming. The platform is fully accessible and is run by the CBM Inclusion Advisory Group, giving WFP access to a group of disability inclusion experts. It provides technical support, particularly for humanitarian operations, in all areas of programming but most notably on increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in WFP's work.
8. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific has embarked on an Asia-Pacific disability inclusion initiative with the hiring in July 2021 of a disability inclusion advisor to carry on initial work to pilot road map implementation in the country offices for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. In addition, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific is supporting Cambodia, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal as described in the bullets below and, most recently, Pakistan, by providing guidance on technical support on disability inclusive programming for refugees from Afghanistan.
  - The regional bureau is continuing to work with local actors to build their capacity and improve data collection and analysis for humanitarian response in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh while stepping up activities on community engagement, training and data collection in the other countries mentioned above – including through a focus on areas of programming such as school-based programmes and social protection. This is being done in coordination with CBM (which continue to provide support through a programme funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade-funded programme and the helpdesk). The Trinity College Dublin partnership is also instrumental in implementing the Washington Group questions on disability in research, assessments and analyses across country offices in the region.

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<sup>3</sup> [WFP Accessibility Review Service](#) explainer video.

- The regional bureau has recruited a consultant to work on disability inclusive supply chains from November 2021. The consultant will build on the procurement guidance that was developed at headquarters. The bureau has also been working with a disability inclusive vendor in the Philippines to improve employment and reasonable accommodation guidance at the regional bureau level.
  - On facilities, the regional bureau conducted the first accessibility study in Bangkok based on guidance developed at headquarters. Accessibility studies and audits are currently being rolled out in various pilot countries.
  - In terms of human resources, the regional bureau was the first office to add disability inclusive language to its vacancy announcements. People with disabilities and a group of experts are reviewing all of its recruitment policies and procedures to identify any barriers to the recruitment of people with disabilities. The regional bureau is working on a technical guidance note on Inclusive hiring for WFP. It has also been involved in reviewing a draft policy on reasonable accommodation. This is all being done in close coordination with the Human Resources Division at headquarters.
  - Regional bureau communications staff have been working with a specialist communications advisor to create visual communications to combat stereotypes, which will be released on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December 2021).
9. Through the Trinity College Dublin partnership and collaboration with research, assessment and monitoring and vulnerability analysis and monitoring (VAM) technical teams, WFP has re-written its methodology on collecting disability disaggregated data. This will be a core part of the protection and accountability to affected populations indicators of the new CRF. In addition, and through support for country offices such as those for Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, the Trinity College Dublin partnership and local VAM teams have developed technical guidance on the use of the Washington Group questions for needs assessments and targeting exercises – assisting country offices to prioritize food assistance to persons with disabilities who experience food insecurity. Most recently, the disability inclusion team, together with Trinity College Dublin, is working with WFP's Emergencies and Transitions Unit to ensure that qualitative data on barriers faced by persons with disabilities are collected in accessible feedback and community engagement systems. This is part of year 2 of the scope of work of the partnership, i.e., going beyond disaggregation to the collection of accessible qualitative data and ensuring that disability inclusion can be mainstreamed across programme design and accountability to affected populations processes.

#### **Existing gaps, challenges and opportunities**

10. The UNDIS Executive Office of the Secretary-General frequently identifies and issues guidance on areas in which the United Nations system is lagging behind on certain indicators. WFP tailors these guidelines so that its progress is aligned with UNDIS standards. Communication and consultation with persons with disabilities are two areas where WFP, like all United Nations entities, is lagging behind. With an expert consultant who recently came on board, WFP guidelines on consultation with persons with disabilities will be developed based on the UNDIS guidelines. The guidelines will enable WFP staff to include persons with disabilities more meaningfully in their programmes and processes. Likewise, a communications expert is currently in the process of drafting WFP disability inclusive communications guidelines based on UNDIS guidelines that were recently published; it is expected that sensitisation and training based on the guidelines will be carried out.

11. Based on reflections and lessons learned to date, and as reflected in the Secretary-General's 2020 UNDIS report, some of the existing gaps and challenges are as follows:
  - i) Strengthening the capacity and technical expertise of staff is to be a priority moving forward, especially at the country level. This requires more funding.
  - ii) There is a need to improve data collection, as a lack of data is still a considerable challenge.
  - iii) It is necessary to make consultation with people with disabilities a reality (e.g., by linking up with local organizations); they need to be central to WFP's work and workforce.
  - iv) Intersectionality must be highlighted.
  - v) It is necessary to capitalize on advances made during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a transformative impact on how WFP works, and as staff return to their offices areas of success, such as improvements in digital accessibility, should be leveraged to re-energize momentum on disability inclusion.
  - vi) Expenditure on disability inclusion must be tracked. This will be rolled out in reporting in 2022.
  - vii) There is a continuing need to think about how to secure adequate sustainable funding for disability inclusion.

## Ways forward

12. During an informal consultation with Board members on the new strategic plan (September 2021), members said that disability inclusion should be properly reflected along with other inclusion issues in the new strategic plan. They also proposed a one-year extension of the current disability inclusion road map through the end of 2022, which would allow WFP to complete all current activities.
13. Moving forward, the goal is to go further than UNDIS, to the end of the 2016 strategic plan, with an ambitious goal to make WFP a disability inclusive organization. The current road map has eight key result areas, each with a dedicated custodian. Certain elements of work can and must be mainstreamed, but there is a need for centralized coordination and expertise. This will be a staggered process. There will be a stronger role for regional bureaux and country offices, which will have autonomy to make disability inclusion a reality. Compliance with entity-level frameworks will be coordinated centrally at headquarters, as is done with regard to gender, but with evidence and information flowing from country offices and regional bureaux.
14. WFP has identified five key principles to enable the successful mainstreaming of disability inclusion into its key areas of work
  - i) **Information, evidence and data collection:** Understanding more about who is disabled and what barriers are faced will enable WFP to better plan for disability inclusion and learn about how disability inclusive processes are working in the long term.
  - ii) **Meaningful participation:** WFP must Promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of its work, for example through the affinity group or engagement with organizations of persons with disabilities.
  - iii) **Actions for systemic change:** This refers to organizational culture, how WFP advocates, communicates and ensure that the people with disabilities feel valued in the workplace and in its work.

- iv) **Accessibility:** Accessibility is a prerequisite to inclusion – WFP’s digital and physical environments must be based on universal design in order for its work to become more inclusive.
  - v) **Capacity building:** Capacity building is needed to enhance technical knowledge of what disability inclusion means and how to ensure that such knowledge is embedded in the work that it does and in its workplaces at the local level.
15. As part of WFP’s bottom-up strategic budgeting exercise and to ensure continuity of disability inclusion in 2022, a proposal has been submitted advocating core budgeting for 2022 for three core activities: ensuring a coordination function for disability inclusion through the continued presence of a core disability inclusion team at headquarters; establishing systems for the engagement of people with disabilities; and consolidating learning and knowledge on disability inclusion.
16. Looking farther ahead, WFP has incorporated disability inclusion into its strategic plan for 2022-2025 and the CRF<sup>4</sup> outlining three goals: to realize the meaningful participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all operations and programming; to integrate disability inclusion as a key consideration for management and support functions; and to become an employer of choice for persons with disabilities This starts with the commitment to identifying and addressing barriers faced by persons with disabilities in all aspects of WFP’s work. Adopting a people-centred approach, WFP will invest in improving universal accessibility; strengthening data collection; establishing standards and guidance; and working closely with partners to reduce the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in all of their diversity.

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<sup>4</sup> [WFP strategic plan 2022-2025](#), box 10, page 32.