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## ANNEX VII: LESSONS LEARNED FROM EVALUATIONS IN 2022

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1. In 2022, 26 centrally managed evaluations were completed and presented to the Board for consideration. Twenty of the 26 were country strategic plan (CSP) evaluations undertaken in five of WFP's six regions and covering diverse settings, including emergency situations. The CSPs evaluated were those for Afghanistan,<sup>1</sup> Algeria,<sup>2</sup> Bolivia (Plurinational State of),<sup>3</sup> the Central African Republic,<sup>4</sup> Chad,<sup>5</sup> Ecuador,<sup>6</sup> India,<sup>7</sup> Jordan,<sup>8</sup> the Kyrgyz Republic,<sup>9</sup> Mauritania,<sup>10</sup> Mozambique,<sup>11</sup> Nigeria<sup>12</sup>, Pakistan,<sup>13</sup> the State of Palestine,<sup>14</sup> Peru,<sup>15</sup> South Sudan,<sup>16</sup> Sri Lanka,<sup>17</sup> the Sudan,<sup>18</sup> Tajikistan<sup>19</sup> and the United Republic of Tanzania.<sup>20</sup> Other centrally managed evaluations completed in 2022 comprised a strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS,<sup>21</sup> a policy evaluation of WFP's role in peacebuilding in transition settings,<sup>22</sup> a synthesis report on performance measurement and monitoring<sup>23</sup> and a review of the implementation of recommendations from thematic evaluations of a strategic or global nature<sup>24</sup>. Inter-agency humanitarian evaluations (IAHEs) of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and the response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) were also completed in 2022. The findings from those evaluations, along with those from the 27 decentralized evaluations completed in 2022, provide robust evidence to inform WFP's learning and decision-making. The lessons and examples presented in this annex are drawn from the centralized evaluations completed in 2022. Key findings are outlined in the following paragraphs.
2. **WFP provided relevant, responsive programming in diverse national contexts.** All the CSPs evaluated were found to be well-aligned with relevant overarching national policy frameworks and government priorities. WFP was also able to maintain relevant

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<sup>1</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-A.

<sup>2</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-D/1/Rev.1.

<sup>3</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-B.

<sup>4</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-D/2.

<sup>5</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-D/3.

<sup>6</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-C.

<sup>7</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-D.

<sup>8</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-E.

<sup>9</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-F.

<sup>10</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-D/4.

<sup>11</sup> WFP/EB.A/2022/7-B.

<sup>12</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-D/5.

<sup>13</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-G.

<sup>14</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-D/6.

<sup>15</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-H.

<sup>16</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-I.

<sup>17</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-J.

<sup>18</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-K.

<sup>19</sup> WFP/EB.2/2022/6-L.

<sup>20</sup> WFP/EB.A/2022/7-C.

<sup>21</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-A.

<sup>22</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-B.

<sup>23</sup> WFP/EB.1/2023/5-C.

<sup>24</sup> WFP/EB.A/2022/7-D.

programming in response to evolving national circumstances. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remained a critical contextual factor that contributed to rising food insecurity and the increased vulnerability of beneficiaries. CSP evaluations highlighted WFP's ability to mitigate the impact of new shocks, including the pandemic, and to scale up assistance where required. The IAHE of the COVID-19 response found that members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee "quickly and creatively" adapted programming in response to emerging needs.

3. **Evaluations found mixed performance in the targeting of assistance for the most vulnerable people and communities.** WFP conducted a wide range of vulnerability and other needs assessments with a view to ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable communities were understood, for example, in Afghanistan. Those efforts contributed to more accurate and appropriate beneficiary targeting in countries such as Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru. The specific targeting of persons with disabilities was noted in at least three CSP evaluations (those for Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the Central African Republic and the State of Palestine). However, several CSP evaluations found shortcomings in targeting, including programmes that struggled to reach the most vulnerable people and communities, either because the overall design of the CSP followed a "one-size-fits-all" approach (Jordan) or because conditionality requirements were imposed (Kyrgyz Republic). Challenges were encountered when targeting with the highest rates of malnutrition (Chad) and when targeting criteria required updating (State of Palestine, the Sudan). Given the magnitude of the needs faced, WFP was assessed as being too geographically dispersed and thus "spread too thinly" to fully address all the needs in South Sudan.
4. **Evaluations recorded the increasing use of cash-based transfers, with associated efficiency gains.** In-kind transfer modalities remain important in certain settings. Both the strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS and the IAHE of the COVID-19 response found an increased use of cash-based-transfers (CBTs) and vouchers for the delivery of food assistance. Across CSP evaluations, CBTs were found to be an effective and efficient modality where circumstances allowed, being well-received and often preferred by beneficiaries (Nigeria). At least four CSP evaluations found that CBTs resulted in significant reductions in transfer costs (Mauritania, Mozambique, the Sudan and Tajikistan), and in the State of Palestine the use of CBTs allowed WFP to swiftly adapt beneficiary lists and transfer values when needs increased. In-kind food assistance remained an important part of WFP's toolkit in 2022 where food availability was limited locally, such as in Chad. CSP evaluations also found that general distributions helped to mitigate food insecurity in countries such as Afghanistan and South Sudan and proved a vital source of life-saving support for the most vulnerable refugees in Jordan.
5. **School feeding programmes contributed to positive results for children and national strategy implementation, but home-grown school feeding models encountered some challenges.** Evaluation findings demonstrated that school feeding interventions improved school attendance and retention rates and provided an important social protection mechanism for vulnerable children (Peru, Tajikistan). Some CSP evaluations found that school feeding programmes were adapted successfully to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic where WFP helped to establish the distribution of take-home rations for schoolchildren (India, Nigeria). Challenges to school feeding programmes in 2022 included security and access constraints (Central African Republic), funding shortages, and supply and access challenges arising from COVID-19 (Afghanistan, Mauritania, Mozambique, Pakistan, the Sudan, Tajikistan), resulting in fluctuations in the size and number of food rations that WFP provided and the number of beneficiaries reached.

6. WFP helped governments to establish home-grown school feeding models in several countries (Nigeria, South Sudan and Sri Lanka,). Establishing the necessary partnerships with local producers was sometimes challenging owing to a lack of resources and difficulty in maintaining an operational presence during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bolivia (Plurinational State of)). The strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS found that home-grown school feeding has "not yet been matched with commensurate attention to capacity strengthening of smallholder farmers, farming associations, women producer groups and the local food systems around schools." The evaluation suggested that WFP's new school feeding strategy, which outlines a broader, more integrated package of school health and nutrition interventions, will help to address some of the challenges faced in home-grown school feeding programming.
7. **WFP's expanded strategic contribution and scale of work on nutrition showed positive results in the treatment and prevention of moderate acute malnutrition, but challenges remained in stunting prevention.** The strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS reported that WFP had improved the quality, expanded the scale and improved the monitoring of food assistance since 2017, moving from no countries reporting on nutrition activities in 2017 to 69 countries in 2021. CSP evaluations reflected those findings; in the United Republic of Tanzania, WFP's role as a strategic partner in nutrition gained increased prominence during the implementation of the CSP. In Peru, WFP's support for the establishment of a zero hunger advisory committee that aimed to promote the achievement of SDG 2 contributed to the strategic positioning of WFP as a trusted government partner.
8. The strategic evaluation found that WFP's nutrition-specific interventions played a significant role in the treatment and prevention of moderate acute malnutrition, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies. CSP evaluations endorsed that finding, reporting that WFP had met or exceeded outcome targets in several countries through successful strategies, including the provision of specialized nutritious foods coupled with nutrition counselling and social and behaviour change communication, and capacity strengthening for primary healthcare staff (Tajikistan). The evaluation also found that WFP was employing "creative models of context-specific, nutrition-sensitive interventions" in other programme areas, such as food assistance for assets, social protection, cash-based programming and school feeding.
9. The strategic evaluation's finding of a mixed performance in stunting prevention activities was reflected in CSP evaluations. The coverage of stunting prevention activities and their expected sustainability were assessed as insufficient in Pakistan and South Sudan, and WFP's design of those activities was found too limiting in Mauritania, extending only to the provision of fortified foods and awareness-raising activities. The strategic evaluation of the nutrition policy noted that the predominant focus on the treatment of wasting and the prevention of stunting "is now excessive in light of WFP's current work and varied approaches to preventing malnutrition in an environment where malnutrition is increasingly examined holistically".
10. **Some resilience-building activities delivered positive individual benefits, but overall effectiveness was mixed.** Gains from resilience-building activities affected mainly beneficiaries, resulting in improved livelihoods and economic standing in Chad, the Niger, Pakistan, and the State of Palestine. There were promising results from livelihoods programming for farmers that benefitted from sufficient multi-year funding, in the State of Palestine, Peru and Sri Lanka). However, evaluations reported that resilience activities tended to be small in scale compared with the level of need and the potential opportunities available. Challenges to effectiveness included geographic dispersion and funding

- constraints (Afghanistan, Central African Republic) and the reprioritization of programming when emergencies arose (the Sudan).
11. **Country capacity strengthening was increasingly central to WFP's role, although ensuring the sustainability of interventions was a challenge.** In some country settings, WFP moved gradually from the direct implementation of programming towards an “enabling” role in strengthening national capacities and supporting the development process (Ecuador, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Sri Lanka). Evaluations reported that WFP successfully provided a wide range of technical assistance initiatives to support country capacity strengthening, including helping to design public policies on food security and nutrition, supporting social dialogue on relevant issues and enhancing the delivery of food security and nutrition policies and programmes (Ecuador, India). WFP also provided governments with institutional support for adaptive social protection in, for example, Mauritania and the State of Palestine, and for the design of national food security and school feeding frameworks in Jordan.
  12. However, WFP's performance in country capacity strengthening, and thus its potential for sustainability, faced constraints in some countries. Those constraints included a short-term perspective with regard to technical assistance and insufficient engagement at subnational levels (Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan), and challenges with the scalability and funding of country capacity strengthening activities (United Republic Tanzania). In certain settings, a long-term approach to country capacity strengthening was impeded by the need to pursue humanitarian priorities arising from the pandemic and other emerging crises (Chad, Kyrgyz Republic, Nigeria). The high turnover of government and WFP staff was an issue in several countries.
  13. **WFP's partnerships were key to performance but some opportunities were missed.** Evaluations reported that where partnerships were effective, WFP had invested time and commitment in establishing synergies with various government and United Nations entities and had maintained a strong presence in inter-agency processes. For example, the strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS found evidence that efforts to improve partnership had yielded results, noting their impact on the potential to contribute to improved outcomes, systems change and sustainability. However, inconsistencies were noted. For example, in Nigeria WFP formed strong partnerships within the humanitarian country team, but beyond that, at the operational level, the same level of success was not always evident. The evaluation of the Kyrgyz Republic CSP noted that WFP's strength lays in coordination rather than collaboration, which was evident from the relatively few examples of joint programming. Evaluations also pointed to situations where there was opportunity for partnerships to address implementation “silos”, which would help the development of more strategic, synergetic partnerships built on each actor's comparative advantage.
  14. **The humanitarian principles were well-embedded in WFP programming.** The peacebuilding policy evaluation highlighted WFP's long legacy of adherence to humanitarian principles, which pre-dates the rollout of the 2013 peacebuilding policy. Evaluations reported consistent adherence to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, Jordan, Peru, Tajikistan) and noted the presence of effective systems for ensuring that those principles were upheld (State of Palestine). Moreover, the peacebuilding evaluation reported that WFP staff were guided by the humanitarian principles in their approach to conflict sensitivity. Evaluations also highlighted the challenges of adhering to the humanitarian principles in contested settings – such as in Yemen or when WFP was seen to be closely collaborating with governments and the military for access and logistics purposes – and the potential that has to create a negative perception of WFP's operational independence (Nigeria). However, in

similarly challenging settings, such as in South Sudan and the Sudan, WFP successfully adhered to the principles.

15. **WFP's performance in addressing gender equality and women's empowerment, as highlighted in previous annual performance reports, remained mixed.** CSP evaluations found some positive gains in gender mainstreaming through engagement in WFP's corporate gender transformation programme (Afghanistan, Pakistan, State of Palestine, United Republic of Tanzania) and work with partners (Ecuador, South Sudan). Evaluations found examples of gender-transformative activities in the design of interim CSPs, such as the engagement of men and boys as caregivers for nutrition counselling and as change agents for nutrition improvement in South Sudan. However, important gaps remained: the strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS found that WFP focused on ensuring gender parity across programming but that the application of that focus within programmes was inconsistent. The evaluation suggested that a lack of capacity and dedicated budgets, and weak lines of accountability in WFP country offices hindered the consistency of programming on gender and the extent to which gender-transformative measures were embedded in programmatic approaches. CSP evaluations in Afghanistan and South Sudan called for more in-depth gender analysis to inform WFP's gender transformation agenda, given the specific challenges in those countries.
16. **Protection considerations and the mitigation of protection risks were built into programme design, but operating contexts presented challenges to protection.** Evaluations found that despite contextual challenges, overall WFP had taken steps to identify and mitigate protection risks within its activities. For example, CSP evaluations in Afghanistan, Ecuador, Mauritania and South Sudan reported that WFP had invested in protection and strengthened implementation efforts and that this had enabled beneficiaries to obtain assistance without protection or safety challenges and in a dignified manner (Sri Lanka). CSP evaluations also noted efforts to enhance protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and to address gender-based violence in Mozambique and South Sudan. Challenges identified included a limited technical capacity to address protection issues in WFP country offices (Mozambique, the Sudan), and similar challenges were also noted among WFP's cooperating partners (Central African Republic, Pakistan).
17. **WFP made efforts to enhance accountability to affected populations by establishing reporting channels, but these did not always function as intended.** Evaluations reported that WFP had made efforts to establish complaint and feedback mechanisms such as feedback hotlines, including those set up during the response to cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique. However, the mechanisms were not always systematically used by beneficiaries, as in Sri Lanka and the Sudan, leading to the underreporting of concerns. Major challenges included a lack of awareness among affected populations regarding the various community feedback mechanisms at their disposal, a lack of access to the mechanisms, discomfort about using the mechanisms, and slow or inconsistent follow-up to beneficiaries' feedback.
18. **Environmental sustainability was not an explicit focus of the CSPs evaluated in 2022, with a few exceptions.** In Ecuador, WFP undertook specific activities related to climate change adaptation. In Tajikistan, it made efforts to reduce carbon emissions, and in the Sudan it implemented a large-scale solar power project.
19. **Evaluation findings reflected WFP's growing efforts to promote work at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, but those efforts were not always fully operationalized.** The peacebuilding policy evaluation concluded that WFP's main contribution to peace continued to be its work on food insecurity, resilience and livelihoods. The evaluation found that WFP's focus had been increasingly effective in areas such as the

provision of technical support for scaling up food fortification, working at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to protect nutrition, including by advocating nutrition-sensitive social protection, and enhancing food systems for nutrition. However, the evaluation also reported that WFP's ambitions regarding the interlinking of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work had not been consistently fulfilled owing, in part, to limited operationalization and the need for stronger complementarity and collaboration between WFP and key partners in order to make progress.

20. **CSP evaluations continued to underscore the challenges presented by unpredictable funding, the earmarking of funding and a lack of diversity in financial resources.** Fluctuations in the availability of funding caused difficulties in Afghanistan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and the State of Palestine, while the lack of donor diversification was a difficulty in the Central African Republic and the Kyrgyz Republic. In Chad, Jordan and South Sudan, WFP encountered challenges in distributing CBTs owing to the earmarking of funding at the transfer modality level. Inconsistency in funding availability also constrained the effectiveness of nutrition programming in Mozambique and Yemen, and in Mauritania the same challenge impeded the continuity of treatment between severe and moderate acute malnutrition. The peacebuilding policy evaluation pointed to the potential opportunities to attract multi-year funding and conduct longer-term planning offered by the shift to multi-year CSPs.
21. **WFP's advocacy efforts varied considerably between country contexts.** WFP did not always engage sufficiently in advocacy efforts to demonstrate its comparative advantage or to promote the interests of vulnerable people (Chad, India). However, there were examples of effective policy dialogue and advocacy efforts. In Sri Lanka, for example, in the face of underfunded programming, WFP was able to identify opportunities for collaboration with partners through advocacy efforts aimed at closing the funding gaps.
22. **The use of technology helped to facilitate the provision of efficient and effective assistance in certain country contexts.** CSP evaluations in Peru and Sri Lanka reported that the digitization of beneficiary registration systems and transfer management platforms helped to expedite the delivery of support. In India, technological innovations promoted by WFP provided cost-efficient modalities for reaching indirect beneficiaries and achieving impact at scale. In Jordan, the CSP evaluation found that WFP's investment in technology innovation and digital solutions contributed greatly to increased cost-efficiency and the continuation of emergency assistance. The Plurinational State of Bolivia CSP evaluation noted positive results from the introduction of an innovative early warning system that built on ancestral and indigenous knowledge to support weather predictions, and the introduction of drones to support emergency responses.
23. **Human resources presented one of the major challenges to the realization of the ambitions set out in WFP policies and CSPs.** Staff availability and fluctuations in the levels of staffing presented challenges to operational delivery in several countries, such as Afghanistan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Pakistan. The high turnover of WFP staff was a challenge in the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Tajikistan and the United Republic of Tanzania, and reliance on short-term consultants and difficulties in recruiting and retaining experts with the right set of skills in the Mauritania, Mozambique and United Republic of Tanzania country offices impeded the continuity of technical knowledge. The CSP evaluation in the Sudan found that WFP experienced a gap between the strategic focus and ambitions set out in the CSP and the organizational structures and arrangements available to realize them.

24. Evaluations also highlighted the challenge of attracting and retaining international staff for technical and managerial positions. For example, the strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS reported that despite the presence of a large, dedicated and skilled nutrition team at headquarters, capacity was sometimes limited by gaps in the workforce at the country and regional levels. Similarly, a small-scale team supported WFP's HIV response at the global level, and country-level HIV focal points – where they existed – frequently had dual roles.
25. **The use of monitoring data primarily for reporting, rather than programme improvement, was a recurring challenge.** The synthesis report on WFP's performance measurement and monitoring, which collated findings from 53 centralized and decentralized evaluations completed between 2018 and 2021, found that more than 90 percent of those evaluations recommended improvements to monitoring systems or practices. Most recommendations focused on improving monitoring frameworks, addressing data gaps, enhancing data quality and disaggregation and expanding data use.
26. Evaluations also highlighted a need to expand the collection, analysis and reporting of qualitative data in order to better contextualize WFP's achievements and support the organization's ability to learn and adapt based on monitoring information. The strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS found that although WFP collected large quantities of data, it was not yet a data-driven organization. The evaluation reported that there was a recognized need for more attention to monitoring, including in addressing the gaps in existing indicators, particularly qualitative ones, improving the feasibility and practicability of good-quality data collection against core indicators, and directing greater attention and resources to data use and valid interpretation in support of programming. The performance measurement and monitoring synthesis report quoted from the 2020 strategic evaluation of school feeding, which pointed out that a focus on merely counting beneficiaries would result in "hitting the target but missing the point".
27. A particular challenge reported in evaluations was monitoring and reporting on performance in country capacity strengthening activities, with challenges including the relevance and validity of corporate outcome indicators and the difficulties in identifying WFP's specific contributions to outcomes. The effects of those challenges were reflected in CSP evaluations: the evaluation of the India CSP reported difficulties in measuring WFP's contribution to country capacity strengthening in quantitative terms, while in Peru, although WFP had broadly met its country capacity strengthening targets, difficulties were encountered in the quantitative measurement of progress owing to challenges related to indicator validity and data collection. In the United Republic of Tanzania, similar challenges reduced the visibility of WFP's contribution to country capacity strengthening.
28. **Although challenges remained, evaluations reported that the adaptability, leadership and commitment throughout WFP had enabled the effective delivery of programming.** The review of the implementation of recommendations from thematic evaluations of a strategic or global nature identified common enabling and hindering factors from ten evaluations published between 2016 and 30 June 2020. Those findings remained broadly relevant to evaluations conducted in 2022. Common enabling factors included WFP's versatility, its focused leadership and the commitment and collaboration of departments, divisions and units either directly or through overarching committees or working groups. Common hindering factors were human resource capacity and the availability of financial resources and decision-making regarding corporate prioritization and resource allocation. Other factors included a lack of clarity on the shift in roles and responsibilities, and regional and country-level involvement in and guidance on decision-making.