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For information

Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

Report on the field visit of the WFP Executive Board

Acknowledgements

The Executive Board Member States whose representatives participated in the field visit to Rwanda from 25 to 29 November 2024 would like to express their appreciation and gratitude to the WFP Secretariat and the WFP teams at the regional and country levels for their efficient planning and coordination of the visit, which provided an opportunity to gain a firsthand overview of WFP's work and the situation in the country.

Members would also like to thank the Government of Rwanda for hosting the visit, as well as the local partners and institutions working with WFP and the WFP staff for their dedication, outstanding organization, welcoming spirit and the collegial working atmosphere experienced throughout the mission.

Introduction

1. Representatives of Member States of the Executive Board of WFP took part in a field visit to Rwanda from 25 to 29 November 2024. The participants were representatives of Chile, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia and Poland.
2. The visit enabled the Board member representatives to gain direct insight into WFP operations in Rwanda, including the organization's close collaboration with government counterparts, the United Nations system and other partners in Kigali, as well as its field activities in the south and west of the country, particularly in areas where food security is most severe.
3. The Board member representatives observed the policies, procedures and structures in place to support WFP operations in Rwanda and learned about the implementation of WFP's strategies and programmes at the national and field levels. This included a review of support

Focal point:

Mr P. Ward
Secretary to the Executive Board
Executive Board Secretariat Division
email: philip.ward@wfp.org

for the national school feeding programme, resilience and livelihood-building initiatives, as well as emergency preparedness measures. The delegation also visited refugee operations and agricultural cooperatives, and witnessed firsthand the role of WFP in facilitating school meals, agricultural resilience and business incubation.

4. The representatives reviewed and discussed the impacts and results of WFP programmes with government officials, local authorities, implementing partners and community representatives. They also received briefings on the national context in which WFP operates, including development priorities and regional dynamics. In addition to field visits, the delegation engaged with a wide range of stakeholders in Kigali, including senior government officials, local communities, members of the diplomatic community, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
5. WFP's work in Rwanda was noted to be closely aligned with national priorities, reflecting a strong relationship of trust with the Government. The delegation noted the value of WFP's regular, constructive dialogue with national authorities – an asset that enables effective humanitarian diplomacy.

Background

6. The field visit was organized in two segments. The initial and concluding days were spent in Kigali, offering the delegation an opportunity to engage with the United Nations country team (notably the Rome-based agencies), partners and senior government officials. The core of the visit involved travel to the south and west of the country – regions most affected by food insecurity

Meeting with government officials

7. High-level meetings held in Kigali included discussions with H.E. Prime Minister Dr Edouard Ngirente and the Ministers of Agriculture, Education and Disaster Management. These engagements confirmed that WFP's work is well aligned with national strategies and welcomed by the Rwandan authorities, who view WFP as a trusted partner in efforts to advance resilience and food security.

Meeting with the United Nations Resident Coordinator

8. While in Kigali, the delegation engaged with the United Nations system, observing strong collaboration particularly between the Rome-based agencies. Coordination between WFP and other partners is well integrated into the national framework, underscoring a shared commitment to the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

Field visits

9. Delegates visited WFP operations in Kigeme and Nkamira refugee camps near the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Lake Kivu. In addition, they visited projects focused on agricultural livelihoods in Mushishito, school feeding operations in Kibirizi, and entrepreneurial innovation and resilience building initiatives in Rutsiro. A standout feature was the visible engagement of young people in value-added agriculture and local enterprise development — key to long-term sustainability.

Conclusions

10. In the past 30 years, Rwanda has made remarkable strides in stability, development and social cohesion. Economic growth and investment are producing tangible benefits. Food insecurity persists, however, especially in rural southwestern areas, where one in five households remains affected. With the population having doubled in the last three decades and demographic growth expected to continue, the country will have to address the dual challenge of modernizing its agri-food systems and diversifying its

economy to continue on the path to resilience. The situation of the country is therefore consolidated but still fragile; WFP activities must reflect this ambiguity as much as possible.

11. Almost all of those who spoke with the delegation – whether politicians or smallholder farmers – highlighted the challenge of climate change, manifested as extreme weather events, including insufficient rainfall during the rainy season, closely followed by flash flooding, as well as the loss of fertile soil caused by erosion. The growth of agricultural produce for export purposes and the development of value chains are priorities taken into account in WFP programmes. The Africa Improved Foods processing plan, supported by WFP, illustrates progress made but also the persistent fragility.
12. The Government of Rwanda's commitment to the national school meals policy, which it has adopted with the goal of universalization, must be commended. The commitment was made without any guarantee of international financial support, as highlighted by the Prime Minister. The national school feeding programme has already received international recognition, with Rwanda among the leading examples within the School Meals Coalition. It has also been successful at the local level, mobilizing teachers and parents in the daily management of school meal activities, from gardening to meal preparation.
13. Another important focus of attention is the situation of the most vulnerable populations, displaced people and refugees, and emergency response capacity. Rwandan authorities are exemplary in their commitment to developing national emergency response capacities, both in relation to natural disasters and through their generous refugee policy. At the same time, WFP has a robust supply chain and significant resources to strengthen and complement these national approaches. Developments since the end of 2024 have shown the importance of maintaining a rapid, effective and independent humanitarian response capacity in the Lake Kivu region.
14. Nevertheless, given the scale of the challenges faced elsewhere on the continent and in light of global budgetary constraints, members of the mission also questioned the limitations of a costly humanitarian approach carried out by an international humanitarian actor such as WFP and saw a need to recommend to the Rwandan Government and WFP accelerating local resilience responses or integrating people completely into the local society.
15. WFP's work in Rwanda is implemented within the framework established by the Rwandan authorities. This spirit of cooperation demonstrates a valuable level of trust. The overall direction of the next country strategic plan and the activities already being implemented are firmly integrated into the national transformation strategy. The discussions organized with the WFP team and the various other interlocutors made it possible for the delegation to gauge the extent to which dialogue with the authorities is regular and close. This proximity is an asset for WFP, which will – through constructive and principled dialogue – enable the organization to carry out humanitarian diplomacy efforts.
16. While in Kigali, the mission was also acquainted with the initial negotiations of a concept of operations between Rwandan and Congolese authorities on 25 November and the significant hope that the local diplomatic community placed in a process for ending hostilities. In the spirit of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, the mission strongly joins international calls for a ceasefire. The territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwandan security concerns must both be respected. Moreover, the dramatic humanitarian situation must be addressed, humanitarian access must be granted and humanitarian workers must be protected at all times.