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Management response to the annual evaluation report for 2025

1. Management acknowledges the findings of the 2025 Annual Evaluation Report and appreciates the Office of Evaluation's (OEV) continued contribution to an independent, credible, and useful evaluation function.
2. Management reaffirms its commitment to effective oversight of evaluation follow-up and the systematic use of evaluation evidence. Implementation of recommendations remains uneven across contexts, with progress driven by clear and actionable recommendations, senior leadership engagement, early dialogue with evaluators, and alignment with country strategic plans. Management is therefore focused on reinforcing accountability and prioritization, while strengthening flexible and risk-informed follow-up approaches to support sustained implementation in dynamic operating environments.
3. Drawing on the evidence presented in the Annual Evaluation Report, this management response provides a corporate-level assessment of WFP's performance across the evaluation questions. It highlights areas where progress has been achieved, acknowledges persistent constraints and trade-offs, and situates management actions within existing strategies, policies and agreed evaluation responses.

How has WFP's strategic positioning evolved?

4. Management has repositioned WFP to operate through a more differentiated and context-responsive institutional model, in response to increasingly diverse operating environments and a changing global food security and development landscape. WFP has moved away from a one-size-fits-all approach toward clearer articulation of its value proposition across development-oriented engagement, service provision for nationally funded programmes and localization. WFP's comparative advantage is strongest where its role is clearly defined, intentionally adapted to context, and anchored in strategic partnerships. The following examines WFP's positioning in specific areas identified by the evaluation, highlighting both areas of strength and ongoing management attention.

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5. **Positioning in the development arena.** WFP has a well-established role in development-oriented programming, particularly in resilience strengthening, in some protracted crisis settings where humanitarian and development objectives converge. In these contexts, WFP is increasingly positioned as an integrator of food security, social protection and systems strengthening. However, management acknowledges that WFP's development narrative and technical offer are not yet consistently defined or communicated across all operations. Management is strengthening corporate guidance to clarify WFP's development value proposition and comparative advantages, including through enhanced strategic partnerships and improved collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development at the country level.
6. **Positioning as a delivery partner for domestically funded programmes.** WFP's role as a delivery and technical service partner for domestically funded programmes, particularly in social protection, has expanded in response to growing demand for WFP's operational support. In response, management will further clarify WFP's technical service offer to country offices to ensure consistency in supporting nationally owned systems. While management partially agrees with the recommendation to systematically link service provision to capacity strengthening and transition strategies, it notes that such linkages depend on the nature of each engagement and ownership and control of such interventions rest with the requesting entity. Efforts are ongoing to help country offices make more strategic choices about engagement modalities, risk management and transition planning.
7. **Localization and operational realities.** Management reaffirms its commitment to advancing localization in line with the localization policy¹ issued in 2025, which positions national and local actors at the centre of WFP's operational approach. Progress in 2025 demonstrates this commitment, with local and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accounting for the majority of cooperating partners, and a significant share of food sourced regionally or locally, including from smallholder farmers. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen partnerships with local actors and enhance their capacities, supported by the operational capacity strengthening strategy for local NGOs cooperating partners, complemented by research with community-based organizations to inform more effective collaboration across contexts. In parallel, WFP has begun adopting guidance to better enable partnerships with private sector actors and to leverage investments that strengthen the technical and financial capacities of local enterprises. In 2026, WFP will continue to accelerate implementation of the localization policy in line with its costed implementation plan.
8. Digital business transformation underpins WFP's evolving strategic positioning. Management notes the Executive Board's approval of a corporate initiative supporting the digital business transformation plan, aimed at strengthening both strategic and operational delivery. The plan focuses on the digitization of WFP's value chain, the standardization of information technology systems, and the alignment of digital capabilities with organizational and field-level needs.

¹ "Localization policy" (WFP/EB.A/2025/5-A); approved by the Executive Board at its annual session in June 2025.

What did WFP achieve under its three strategic outcomes?

9. Management appreciates OEV's recognition that the previous evaluations reported valuable and meaningful results across the three strategic outcomes, including effective emergency preparedness and response, reduced needs and enhanced resilience to withstand shocks; and enabled government and partner programmes, demonstrating WFP's continued relevance, operational capacity and partnership value in highly complex and volatile contexts.
10. Management also generally agrees with the lessons identified for improvement which align with WFP's own institutional learning and ongoing transformation efforts. These lessons provide an important basis for refining approaches, strengthening systems and enhancing performance under the strategic plan 2026–2029. WFP is committed to implementing the agreed management actions and evaluation recommendations, while building on existing strengths and evidence of impact.
11. **Outcome 1: Effective emergency preparedness and response.** WFP maintained life-saving assistance and preparedness capacities across diverse emergency contexts, despite persistent funding shortfalls, prioritization constraints and pipeline disruptions. While these factors at times adversely affected food security and nutrition outcomes, management notes that WFP continued to mitigate their impact through needs-based prioritization, strengthened planning and risk management, and sustained resource mobilization efforts.
12. **Outcome 2: Reduced needs and enhanced resilience to withstand shocks.** Management recognizes progress in food security, nutrition and livelihoods, while noting constraints in sustaining resilience gains and strengthening value chains. Efforts are under way to develop a set of guidance accompanying the new strategic plan, focused on strategic outcome 2 (Reduced needs and enhanced resilience to shocks), to strengthen programme design, targeting resilience, and enhanced integration through layering and sequencing. In parallel, WFP is advancing programme quality guidance on transition and prioritization across all strategic outcomes, to support more coherent, scalable, and sustainable programming.
13. **Outcome 3: Enabled government and partner programmes.** Management recognizes that effective country capacity strengthening is most achievable where strong alignment with government priorities, sustained partnerships, adequate technical expertise and sustainable financing converge, and evaluation evidence confirms that these conditions have supported results in areas such as social protection, school feeding and disaster preparedness. At the same time, management acknowledges that results have been uneven due to capacity and governance constraints in partner institutions, as well as internal challenges related to coherence, strategic clarity and measurement of capacity strengthening results. To address these gaps, the corporate results framework 2026–2029² strengthens indicator methodologies to better capture both qualitative and quantitative evidence of system-level change, while ongoing efforts to build staff capabilities in systems thinking, and capacity needs assessment aim to improve programme design and delivery.

² "Corporate Results Framework 2026–2029" (WFP/EB.2/2025/3-C/1/Rev.1); approved by the Executive Board at its November session in November 2025.

Did targeting and prioritization enable WFP to identify people most highly affected by food insecurity and malnutrition?

14. Management agrees that WFP's targeting and prioritization approaches have enabled the identification of vulnerable populations in many contexts, particularly where data systems, partner engagement, and implementation fidelity were strong. However, evaluation evidence confirms that effectiveness has been uneven and increasingly constrained across the portfolio. Key causal factors being lack of sufficient resources and manpower.
15. Challenges persist across contexts, particularly due to constraints related to data quality, implementation fidelity and increasingly limited resources. In response, management is implementing actions outlined in the management response to the strategic evaluation on targeting and prioritization. These focus on clearer corporate guidance to country offices, strengthened governance and assurance through a cross-functional targeting group and a targeting assurance framework, and more transparent, agile and cost-effective targeting approaches. Complementary efforts include strengthened monitoring, stakeholder engagement and data use to support decision-making. Together, these actions aim to strengthen country offices' targeting and prioritization rationales and improve transparency, adaptability and efficiency across the portfolio. Social cohesion and community engagement continue to guide targeting and prioritization efforts to promote community acceptance and ensure adherence to 'do no harm'.

How well did WFP address cross-cutting issues in programming?

16. WFP has reinforced its institutional approach to cross-cutting issues with stronger systems and guidance in place. At the same time, consistent application across programmes and contexts remains a challenge, reflecting operational complexity, uneven partner capacities, and resource constraints. Management's focus is therefore on consolidating institutional advances and strengthening coherence in implementation across the portfolio.
17. **Advancing women's empowerment, and protection-centred targeting and prioritization.** WFP works to ensure that its operations, particularly aspects related to targeting and prioritization, systematically take into consideration protection and inclusion concerns, with the objective of ensuring that assistance reaches those most in need, including women and girls, in a safe, dignified and equitable manner, and that barriers that may hinder access to WFP programmes are addressed. Community consultations and information provision are integral to guiding targeting and prioritization efforts, helping ensure that perspectives of affected people inform programme decisions.
18. **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).** Management concurs with the recommendations, which are aligned with existing commitments under the Management Response to the strategic evaluation on PSEA. Efforts will continue to prioritize strengthened community engagement, protection-focused partnerships, and enhanced analytical support for programming and risk mitigation. Building on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Championship, concluded in 2025, WFP has adopted a corporate strategy for 2026–2029, supported by a phased implementation plan with defined roles, indicators and targets to reinforce safeguards, accountability and systems. Moreover, partnerships with protection-focused actors have considerably increased (from 51 percent in 2023 to 74 percent in 2025) and staff capacities on safe referrals have been reinforced, to strengthen WFP's ability to contribute to joint responses.

19. **Community engagement.** Management reaffirms that community engagement remains integral to WFP programming. The number of country offices having developed community engagement action plans has increased from 13 percent in 2023 to 59 percent in 2025, showing steady increase since the adoption of the corporate results framework indicator on this action. Efforts will continue to strengthen systematic engagement with communities, including marginalized groups, and to enhance the use of feedback to inform programme design and implementation.
20. **Operational independence and conflict sensitivity.** Management notes that WFP has continued to operate with a strong commitment to humanitarian principles and operational independence, supported by guidance on operational independence issued in 2025, country-level assistance and clearly defined escalation pathways, alongside available conflict sensitivity guidance delivered through cost-recovery mechanisms despite reduced in-house capacity.

How time and cost-efficient was WFP?

21. Management agrees with OEV's conclusion that WFP was generally cost-efficient during the period under review, benefiting from economies of scale, supply chain efficiency improvements and cost-containment measures, while also recognizing that timeliness of delivery was uneven. Evaluation evidence confirms that, alongside external constraints, internal processes, staffing gaps linked to funding shortfalls and the cumulative burden of assurance and risk management requirements contributed to delays in some contexts, and that more systematic use of data and analysis is needed to inform and demonstrate efficiency trade-offs.
22. Management is prioritizing the simplification and streamlining of guidance and internal processes during 2026 to improve efficiency and usability at country office level. This includes updating key corporate processes such as country strategic plan development, simplified emergency activation protocols, and the internal resource allocation directive, with a focus on supporting operations in constrained capacity environments. In parallel, management recognizes the need to strengthen the use of data and analysis to inform, guide and demonstrate cost-efficiency actions and trade-offs, while reinforcing focus and concentration in country-level programme planning.

How well did partnerships work?

23. Management notes that partnerships remained essential to WFP's ability to deliver results, with generally strong engagement across United Nations agencies, governments, cooperating partners, and specialized and private-sector actors. Partnerships were most effective where roles, accountabilities and risk arrangements were clearly defined and where engagement extended beyond operational coordination to strategic and policy dimensions. At the same time, management recognizes that partnership effectiveness varied across contexts, particularly in complex emergency settings, where coordination challenges, differences in institutional approaches, constraints related to information and risk-sharing, and operational alignment affected collective performance. Management reaffirms the importance of safeguarding individuals and upholding the principle of "do no harm" as a fundamental and non-negotiable foundation of WFP's operations, strengthening rather than constraining delivery.

24. In this regard, management acknowledges the need to enhance mutual transparency on risk management with external partners, including clearer visibility on risk appetite and the role of cooperating partners in high-risk contexts. Management will therefore strengthen dialogue and transparency on risk management with donors, host governments and partners, supported by updated guidance and tools, and by embedding risk considerations more systematically within strategic partnerships and risk-sharing arrangements.
25. WFP will continue to strengthen its approach to social protection by better positioning country offices within national systems, engaging more consistently in policy dialogue and advancing context-specific approaches. In addition, the capacity strengthening strategy for local NGO cooperating partners, launched in 2026, alongside the 2024 synthesis of evidence and lessons learned, provides a clear basis for strengthening sustainable partnerships and capacity development.
26. Management acknowledges that evaluations provide partial insights on collaboration with international financial institutions (IFIs) and is strengthening a more structured and strategic approach, including clearer partnership modalities, risk-sharing arrangements and enhanced coordination. In line with the resource mobilization strategy, a dedicated IFI strategy has been developed to support more consistent and diversified engagement. Management further notes that private sector partnerships have contributed to innovation, funding diversification and more sustainable approaches. While challenges arise in specific contexts, these are not fully representative of WFP's global engagement, which is increasingly diversified and strategically structured beyond resource mobilization, including through initiatives such as World Food Invest to leverage expertise in agrifood value chains.

How well did WFP prepare for handover and transition?

27. Management assesses that WFP's preparation for handover and transition has strengthened over time, with the most consistent results achieved in interventions anchored in national systems, notably social protection and school feeding, where transition planning was integrated from the outset. At the same time, performance has been uneven across contexts, underscoring the importance of realistic timelines, robust assessments of partner capacities at both central and decentralized levels and clearly sequenced milestones to support responsible transition.
28. Management concurs that working with and through national systems remains the default modality, where feasible and appropriate. In contexts of emergency preparedness and response, WFP will explicitly situate its interventions within a longer-term perspective, including responsible transition planning to national ownership. Management further recognizes that effective and efficient emergency preparedness and response depend on the strength of social protection systems, particularly where these are well integrated with other relevant national systems, including disaster risk management frameworks.