



Inter-religious engagement for Zero Hunger

13 June 2016 at WFP HQ, Rome



World Food Programme



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The moral call to feed the hungry and care for the poor is a shared value of humanity that lies at the heart of the world's major religions. It is echoed in the United Nations Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge and in the global commitment to leave no one behind in the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Achieving Zero Hunger is a significant global challenge — 795 million people around the world are undernourished, 159 million children under the age of 5 are stunted, and 50 million children suffer from wasting. Climate change, protracted conflict, displacement and rising inequality amplify these challenges. El Niño has affected 60 million people so far and threatens to reverse decades of development progress.

Partnerships for Zero Hunger

The starting point for the dialogue with the WFP Membership on inter-religious engagement is clear: the realization that in today's world of unprecedented need and inadequate solutions, ending hunger is possible only with stronger partnerships between governments, religious communities, global food agencies such as WFP, and other stakeholders.

We are not starting from scratch. WFP partners with faith leaders and faith-inspired organizations in more than 40 countries worldwide. Together we are embarking on the Agenda for Humanity, agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development, adopted by United Nations Member States in September last year. Reaffirming our collective commitment to humanity is the most important outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit and requires us to collaborate more actively with all constituencies that influence and play a part in hunger solutions.

WFP welcomes the call – amplified at the World Humanitarian Summit – for greater investment in capacity and allocation of resources to first responders. In many cases, first responders are indeed faith-inspired organizations that accompany the people before, during and after humanitarian crises. They are often the closest to engage the people we serve and to hear from them, not only about their basic needs but also how they want to be capacitated, opening choices to help them realize their own potential. Demonstrating commitment to prioritizing such first responders, WFP is elevating the investment in local capacity strengthening as a central objective in its Strategic Plan for the next four years.

The mutual benefits of collaboration are many and the range of partnerships diverse; the examples below demonstrate this clearly. Faith leaders and organizations have deep roots in communities and intimate knowledge of local needs and vulnerabilities. WFP, for its part, has the expertise and the capacity to work at scale, and each year WFP reaches more than 80 million people affected by conflict, disasters, climate change and chronic hunger with food assistance. By working together, we have the chance to broaden our collective reach and amplify public support for the common goal of a world without hunger.



Issues to be explored

The inter-religious convening on Zero Hunger includes scholars and leaders offering a range of perspectives from the world's major religions and faith-inspired organizations on action against hunger. The goal is a dialogue focused on options and actions that benefit the hungry poor.

Key questions for discussion:

- 1) How can the ethics from religious traditions contribute to the global movement to achieve Zero Hunger?
- 2) What are the comparative advantages offered by faith-inspired organizations in fighting hunger?
- 3) What joint messages and shared commitments from religious communities and WFP can mobilize support for ending hunger?
- 4) How can faith-inspired organizations and WFP partner in areas such as:
 - a) moral leadership – through advocacy and inspirational communication – to ensure that hungry people are in the public conscience;
 - b) collaborative efforts to identify, assist and engage with the most vulnerable populations;
 - c) opportunities to mobilize human and financial resources for fighting hunger.
- 5) What can be done to ensure continuous global, regional, and country-level dialogue with faith-inspired partners to discuss and advance hunger solutions?

Agenda for future action

WFP is proposing an agenda for action on inter-religious engagement for Zero Hunger. Potential actions that could be considered for this agenda include:

1. Establish an Inter-religious Council: WFP hopes religious leaders will accept its invitation to form an Inter-religious Council on hunger. The Council will advise the WFP Executive Director on hunger challenges and the actions required to engage communities around hunger solutions;
2. Engage in joint advocacy: Faith-inspired organizations and WFP to form part of a new global advocacy initiative on Zero Hunger;
3. Invest in capacity strengthening: WFP to solicit the experience and opinion of partners in order to make tailored investments in the capacity of national and local faith-based organizations;
4. Join relevant partnerships: WFP will explore opportunities to join relevant initiatives such as the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development launched by bilateral donors and multilateral organizations in Germany in 2016 and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations for Sustainable Development.

Examples on WFP's partnerships with faith-inspired organizations

WFP partners with more than 1,000 community-based organizations worldwide. Many of them have a faith-inspired mission. This illustrative list of joint activities demonstrates the diversity of partnerships that WFP has developed with various types of faith groups across different regions, hunger contexts, programme activities and transfer modalities. The stories also reveal the mutual benefits of collaboration between faith-inspired organizations and WFP and the complementarity among local, national and international partners. Such partnerships and complementarities enable us to jointly mobilize the necessary attention and resources to save lives and build the resilience of people and communities.



A displaced women collecting cash assistance from World Vision and WFP in Thagara Lisu Camp, Kachin State, Myanmar. WFP/ Pansy Dwe/Myanmar

1 South Sudan various faith-based partners

WFP school meals help hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese children stay in school and build a brighter future. In Rumbek, Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal States, WFP partners with four local faith based organizations – Catholic Diocese of Rumbek, Don Bosco, Akot Christian Mission and Diocese of Aweil Relief and Development – to provide school meals to about 21,000 pupils in 41 schools.

With their deep field presence, these partners are instrumental in targeting and identifying the needs of vulnerable communities. Through their close links with communities, local partners are particularly effective in mobilizing complementary funding for other activities around schools such as hygiene promotion, thereby making school meal activities more effective. The faith-based partners ensure the presence of qualified personnel, teachers and cooks that receive their salaries on a regular basis, and provide cooking utensils and other kitchen needs that WFP would not otherwise be able to cover.

2 Myanmar World Vision

World Vision and WFP have worked together in Myanmar for more than 10 years and are jointly assisting more than 161,000 people with food and cash-based assistance. World Vision's wide geographic presence allows WFP to respond quickly to emergencies. World Vision was a major contributor to the response to large-scale emergencies such as Cyclone Nargis in 2008, Cyclone Giri in 2010 and Cyclone Komen in 2015, and is an active member of the food security sector jointly led by FAO and WFP.

From the inception of the partnership to present, World Vision has executed various WFP funded activities such as distribution of life-saving food assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs), asset creation projects for crisis-affected communities, school feeding in rural and remote food-insecure communities, nutrition assistance for pregnant and breast feeding women and malnourished children, as well as food-by-prescription for people living with HIV and TB clients on treatment. "Throughout the

partnership over the past years, World Vision in Myanmar has proven time and again to be a reliable strategic partner with technical capacities in assessments, implementation, monitoring, reporting and coordination”, explains Dom Scalpelli, WFP Country Director and Resident Representative in Myanmar. “As a faith inspired organization, World Vision plays a particularly important role in working with internally displaced communities in majority Christian Kachin State of predominantly Buddhist Myanmar.”

3 Syria Aga Khan Foundation

The partnership between the Aga Khan Foundation and WFP in the Syrian Arab Republic currently benefits 60,000 people each month, including 6,000 children supported through a nutrition programme, and 1,200 children assisted through a school snack programme. The Aga Khan Foundation has recently implemented WFP livelihood projects in the Syrian Arab Republic that strengthen the local food production and processing systems and create local employment opportunities.



A woman works in a garden with her child near the village of Jatun Mayu, Plurinational State of Bolivia. WFP/Boris Heger

4 Bolivia CARITAS

The current El Niño has impacted millions of people worldwide and its longer-term impact on water supplies, crops, yields and the spread of disease will continue to be felt in many parts of the world for months and possibly years. One of the countries affected by El Niño is the Plurinational State of Bolivia where CARITAS and WFP are working together on asset creation activities, such as agricultural land rehabilitation and community vegetable gardens, to reduce disaster risk and strengthen the livelihoods of communities.

5 Kenya Islamic Relief

In North Eastern Kenya, Islamic Relief supports the Department of Health in Wajir and Mandera counties manage cases of acute malnutrition, while WFP provides specialized nutritious foods. WFP and Islamic Relief collaborate on home fortification with multiple micronutrient powders targeting children 6–23 months. This programme puts technology into the hands of caregivers, empowering them to improve the quality of their children’s diet by adding micronutrients to the locally available foods they prepare at home just before feeding their child. Islamic Relief also supports the locally-recruited community health volunteers who are instrumental in the screening process at community level and in promoting infant and young child nutrition during community dialogue days.



A girl with a coupon from an Islamic Relief and WFP emergency food assistance project in Sana’a, Yemen. WFP/Abdurahman Hussein

Seventeen year-old Fardowsa Osman Mohamed, mother of 13 month-old Siyaad Rogo Mohamed, is a beneficiary of the partnership between Islamic Relief and WFP in Kenya. Fardowsa explains how she learned about various micronutrients added to the powder in order to improve the quality of her baby's diet: "I was happy to know my baby would receive nutrients that I could not provide such as vegetables and fruits. It is very difficult to get vegetables and fruits in this village unless you travel to Wajir town which is 30 kilometers away. Besides, I do not have enough money to buy him fruits and vegetables every now and then. My baby's appetite has greatly improved; Siyaad is eating and breastfeeding a lot now."

7 Malawi Catholic Development Commission

The Catholic Development Commission in Malawi is the local relief and development arm of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi. CADECOM has collaborated with WFP since 2004 and is currently scaling up relief operations to assist communities grappling with the impact of El Niño. The two organizations are assisting around 175,000 people in southern Malawi through both food and cash transfers. CADECOM draws international expertise and resources in humanitarian programming from the sister member affiliates of Caritas Internationalis. CADECOM is also an active member of the Food Security Cluster which is co-chaired by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs and WFP, and participates in the national food security assessments led by the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee.

"CADECOM works tirelessly in implementing food security projects and linking humanitarian and emergency response projects to medium and long-term resilience building programmes such as environment and natural resources management and micro finance development through group savings. Using the Church structures, CADECOM remains a mouthpiece for marginalized Malawians, who are often voiceless and , subject to livelihood shocks due to frequent disasters," says Coco Ushiyama, WFP Country Director in Malawi.



Beneficiaries from joint ADRA-WFP project in Ukraine. ADRA/Ukraine

6 Ukraine ADRA

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and WFP started joint programmes in eastern Ukraine at the start of the conflict in 2014. Together, they distributed food to 135,000 vulnerable people affected by the conflict. WFP and ADRA work hand in hand to reach the most vulnerable people and provide them with food or cash-based transfers in areas where markets are functioning well. Since 2015, WFP and ADRA have also supported food-insecure individuals in hospitals and social institutions with monthly food assistance.



WFP, CARITAS and EU joint visit to the Mores Health Center in the Oio region, Guinea-Bissau. WFP/Dan-Vieira da Costa

8 Somalia Muslim Hands

WFP has collaborated with Muslim Hands in Merka District in Lower Shabelle Region, Southern Somalia, since 2013. The partnership has centred on rebuilding community livelihoods following years of conflict and natural disasters such as drought and floods. Through WFP's Food Assistance for Assets programme, Muslim Hands has mobilized communities to rehabilitate and build assets such as irrigation canals and access roads prioritized through extensive community consultations. Muslim Hands also provides technical guidance and contributes with non-food items such as tools and equipment, while WFP provides food to meet short-term hunger in vulnerable communities. The presence of Muslim Hands has ensured continued follow-up and created ownership among the communities, thus improving the sustainability of the projects.

The irrigation systems have helped more than double agricultural production in project areas since 2013, ensuring sufficient food for all the households involved and surplus income for other needs. Improved roads have allowed farmers better access to markets to sell their surplus produce at premium prices, and boosted access to basic social services such as health centres, schools and other social amenities, especially for women and children. With more women giving birth under supervision at health centres, child mortality has declined.

9 Ghana Christian Child Fund and a local faith partner

WFP, the Christian Children's Fund of Canada, and its local partner, the Presbyterian Farmers Training and Child Development Programme, are working together on a "Safe Water for Improved Livelihoods" project in the East Gonja district of Northern Region, Ghana.

The participatory needs assessment exercises carried out ahead of the project identified safe drinking water as the community's top priority. Through the rehabilitation of dams in three communities, the project is increasing access to and availability of water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing for 3,400 children and

adults. The women and girls no longer need to walk over 20 kilometres to other villages to fetch water during the dry season. Their time is saved for household activities and school attendance, and academic performance, particularly of girls, is improving. WFP provides cash transfers as an incentive to encourage communities to participate, while capacity development activities such as training in water maintenance and hygiene are also part of the project.

10 Iraq CRS

Catholic Relief Services and WFP started partnering on a cash-based transfer pilot in the Akre district of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in February 2016. WFP and CRS are assisting 1,500 vulnerable families, including both IDPs and refugees, with unrestricted cash assistance each month.



An important element of the programme is the Communicating with Communities initiative designed to ensure that people are informed of their entitlements, selection criteria, and appeal mechanisms. The accountability mechanisms include a toll-free hotline, help desks, public notices, and SMS blasts that enable the sharing of key messages and feedback between CRS and communities. Community Ambassadors allow women, the illiterate, elderly and people with disabilities who have limited access or movement to overcome restrictions to communication and participation.



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**Partnership & Advocacy
Coordination Division (PGC)**

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68,
00148 - Rome - Italy