

CONCEPT NOTE
WFP'S NEXT STRATEGIC PLAN (2014–2017)



Informal Consultation

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World Food Programme
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1. This note and the related outline present an initial concept for the World Food Programme's (WFP's) next Strategic Plan (2014–2017). As explained further below, the new Plan will be based on facts and evidence, on the results of reviews and evaluations, and on consultations with the Executive Board, key external partners and WFP staff at all levels. It will frame WFP's unique contribution to the larger system of United Nations agencies and other actors working to break the cycle of hunger, based on its mission and core strengths. It will set out a focused set of objectives and a flexible range of tools that can be tailored to specific contexts.
2. The concept note and outline are preliminary and subject to change through informal consultations with the Board and further discussions with other key partners and stakeholders. The consultation process is described in the "Roadmap for the Development of WFP's Next Strategic Plan (2014–2017)". The next Strategic Plan will be shaped by the final results of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and the Transformative Agenda. It will be informed by a forthcoming gender analysis and will meet the requirements of the United Nations System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.¹

REINFORCING THE SHIFT TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

3. As indicated in the Roadmap and outline, the next Strategic Plan will reinforce WFP's shift from food aid to food assistance launched under the existing Strategic Plan (2008–2013).² Food assistance improves access to, and consumption of, safe and nutritious food. It saves lives, protects livelihoods and enhances health and education by addressing the acute and chronic food and nutrition needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. It is provided through targeted transfers, such as in-kind transfers and cash and vouchers, and effective, efficient and needs-based general distribution, asset-creation, school feeding and nutrition programmes. It supports local markets, strengthens national and community capacity, and builds self-reliance and resilience. It is monitored and evaluated on a regular and transparent basis to maximize and improve programme quality and impact.
4. In addition to highlighting important areas for improvement that will be addressed in the next Strategic Plan, recent reviews and evaluations have shown that the shift to food assistance was timely, valuable and relevant. The mid-term review found that the existing Strategic Plan "positioned WFP to meet emerging and increasingly complex food and nutrition security challenges" and "put WFP on track to better prioritize and deploy sustainable responses by providing targeted solutions."³ A synthesis of four independent evaluations concluded that the shift from food aid to food assistance is "relevant to ongoing changes in the external context in which WFP operates".⁴

5. While reinforcing WFP's shift from food aid to food assistance and broadly continuing the direction set out in the existing Strategic Plan (2008–2013), the next Strategic Plan (2014–2017) will identify “drivers of change” that currently shape and define WFP's operating environment and are likely to become increasingly important in future. Those drivers have been and will be determined through consultations with partners and external experts, lessons learned from the mid-term review and independent evaluations and analyses of emerging global trends, including the paper prepared by the Institute of Development Studies.

6. Based on initial consultations, preliminary analyses and lessons learned to date, the following seven drivers of change are likely to have the most significant strategic impact on future demand for food assistance and WFP's ability to respond. To adapt to these drivers and continue to successfully pursue its critical mission in the years ahead, WFP will need to make certain adjustments to its existing objectives and further improve and strengthen its internal systems and capacities. Specifically, WFP will need to adapt to a world that is increasingly:

- i) **Crisis-prone.** WFP will operate in a volatile, uncertain and fragile environment characterized by rising hunger vulnerability. Significant downside risks, including the risk of recurring food price spikes, are likely to persist in the face of continued political instability, conflict and ever more costly climate-related and other natural disasters.⁵ In an integrated and interconnected global economy, events in one location can quickly spread civil unrest and food insecurity half a world away.⁶ Demand for food assistance may rise suddenly and in ways that are difficult to predict, regardless of whether the absolute number of chronically undernourished people climbs or falls. Today, the poorest are more vulnerable to sudden shocks and remain largely unprepared to cope. Many are living in fragile settings and in countries affected by climate-related disasters. Few have access to safety nets or other forms of social protection.⁷ Increasingly, breaking the cycle of hunger will demand strategies that strengthen the capacity of people, communities and countries to reduce and manage risk.
- ii) **Complex.** Rising risk and vulnerability will further challenge the concept of a linear development path or forward progression through distinct periods of humanitarian relief, recovery and development. In recent years, the world has seen some countries suffer extended periods of fragility, while seemingly stable and rapidly growing economies experience dramatic reversals.⁸ All too often, the path from relief to recovery and development is non-linear and characterized by discontinuous change.⁹ Recent research and analysis is demonstrating the devastating impact of natural disasters and shocks on food security and nutrition, solid returns on investment in risk reduction and the value of pursuing disaster preparedness and emergency responses in ways that lay the foundation for longer-term development.¹⁰ As a result, emphasis is

shifting to dynamic risk management approaches that view food systems as complex systems and that seek to contribute to stability and build lasting resilience to shocks.¹¹

- iii) **Crowded.** WFP will operate in an increasingly crowded field of state and non-state actors that includes many long-standing partners (traditional donors, United Nations agencies and global non-governmental organizations (NGOs)) and new entrants (new donors, local NGOs and the private sector, including foundations and businesses).¹² Host governments will play a more assertive role as partners continue to align food and nutrition security activities behind national plans and priorities, consistent with the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action, the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and the Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security. A strong, leading role for host governments and a wider array of partners are welcome. But the number and diversity of actors – all with different agendas, programmes, operating modalities and requirements – also may challenge national coordinating capacity, particularly during and following shocks, and increase the risk of fragmentation, duplication and competition. Without greater coordination around broader objectives, programmes may demonstrate strong results individually but fail to solve larger problems.
- iv) **Collaborative.** No single organization can address today's complex food security and nutrition challenges. Partnership will be more important than ever, particularly in an increasingly crowded field of actors. WFP already works closely with host governments and with a wide range of other partners, including international organizations, NGOs and private-sector businesses. Along with other United Nations agencies, WFP is acting to strengthen operational coherence through the global cluster approach, Delivering as One, the Transformative Agenda and the move from United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) to United Nations Development Assistance Plans (UNDAPs). These reforms complement steps that donors are taking toward greater coordination and joint missions.¹³ The challenges moving forward will be to better define the role of individual organizations within the broader field of actors, systematically identify strategic partnership opportunities, strengthen mutual accountability and ensure collaboration delivers greater impact and efficiency at the field level.
- v) **Context-specific.** Meeting the urgent food and nutritional needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people while contributing to lasting solutions increasingly will involve work across many unique settings in collaboration with a wide array of different partners. Today, a growing share of the world's poor live in fragile and conflict-affected settings.¹⁴ Stunted children and other vulnerable populations are no longer found mostly in low-income countries.¹⁵ The years since 2008 have seen the urbanization of poverty (particularly in Asia and Latin America) and the percentage of the world's population living in urban areas surpass the percentage living in rural areas.¹⁶ In this new geography of hunger, there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach. To work successfully, organizations will need sufficient flexibility to tailor their actions

and responses to fit particular circumstances and to match government and local capacity. They will need to adjust those responses to the expectations of a diverse range of beneficiaries and contexts.

- vi) **Cost-conscious.** WFP has long maintained a sound governance and oversight structure and a strong commitment to transparency, cost-efficiency, and accountability to internal and external stakeholders. Today, Member States, donors and partners are driving a greater emphasis on accountability, cost-effectiveness, results-based management and value for money through their investments in food assistance and other programmes.¹⁷ The global economic crisis has sharpened this emphasis, as governments have to make more and more difficult spending choices in the face of legitimate pressure from their constituencies. This growing need for better evidence of what works is powering significant advances in monitoring and evaluation. It is sparking alternative funding models like cash on delivery and development impact bonds.¹⁸ To meet rising demand for evidence of impact in the coming years, organizations will need to further build and strengthen knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation systems and better leverage those systems to demonstrate return on investment and to support continuous learning and quality improvement.

- vii) **Capable.** To address urgent food security and nutrition challenges in today's increasingly uncertain and rapidly changing environment, organizations must exemplify resilience by reinforcing financial and supply chain risk management systems necessary to ensure operational continuity in the face of sudden shocks. They will need to prioritize capacity development and strengthen the ability of communities and countries to prepare for shocks, reduce risk and vulnerability and meet their own food and nutrition needs. They will need to streamline internal systems to quickly capitalize on new opportunities and respond to emerging threats. They must get smarter and faster by investing in staff skills and capacity to respond to complex emergencies and to design and execute programmes using new innovative tools and approaches. They will need to improve knowledge management and monitoring and evaluations systems to respond more efficiently and cost-effectively, demonstrate evidence of impact and continuously improve programme quality.

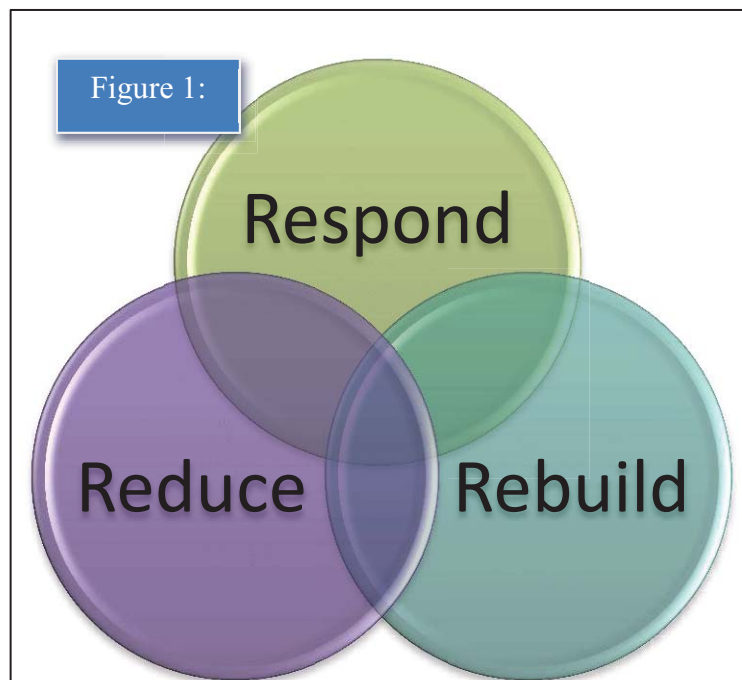
POSITIONING WFP FOR THE FUTURE

7. To adapt to these drivers of change, WFP's next Strategic Plan will reflect the key adjustments to the existing Strategic Plan described below. It will frame and focus objectives and goals for a more complex and collaborative world and position WFP within the broader system of actors working to break the cycle of hunger. It will anticipate what WFP will do in the coming years and how it will do it, strengthening partnerships, elevating capacity development and better enabling WFP staff at all levels to achieve objectives and measure results across multiple contexts through a more flexible range of tools.

Framing and connecting for a complex and collaborative world

8. The next Strategic Plan will frame objectives and goals to match today's increasingly volatile, unpredictable and interconnected world, enabling WFP to adapt faster to changing circumstances, programme across objectives and goals and forge genuine partnerships based on a clear understanding of common priorities, individual roles and core strengths. To accomplish this, the next Strategic Plan will:

- **Establish a new framework.** It will replace the “value chain of hunger” framework of the existing Strategic Plan (2008–2013)¹⁹ – which arrays isolated objectives and goals along a linear path from relief and recovery to capacity development and “hand-over” of hunger solutions – with a more dynamic and inclusive risk management framework (see Figure 1). The new framework will present objectives and goals according to their contribution to three broad and overlapping activities that are shared with partners and collectively contribute to reducing risk, breaking the cycle of hunger and building lasting food and nutrition security. Those shared activities are: (1) preparing for and *responding* to shocks; (2) restoring and *rebuilding* lives and livelihoods; and (3) *reducing* vulnerability and building resilience. This new framework will help to identify opportunities for collaboration in an increasingly crowded field. It will better illustrate the often complex inter-relationships among strategic objectives and enable WFP staff to design and deploy programmes that address multiple priorities.



- **Position WFP in the larger system of actors.** The next Strategic Plan will explicitly position WFP within the larger system of United Nations agencies and other actors pursuing the three shared activities and working to break the cycle of hunger and build lasting food and nutrition security, based on its Mission Statement,²⁰ experience and core strengths. This will help to clarify roles within existing relationships, highlight potential gaps and overlaps, strengthen alignment and coherence and identify new opportunities to complement WFP's strengths, and to pursue joint programmes that deliver strong value added.

Explaining WHAT WFP will do

9. The next Strategic Plan will define what WFP will do in the coming years and present four objectives and twelve corresponding goals within the framework described above. It will maintain a clear focus on meeting the food and nutrition needs of the poorest and most vulnerable while making the following key adjustments based on the existing Strategic Plan. Specifically, it will:

- **Elevate capacity development** as a core part of WFP's broader vision for the future, transforming a single existing priority to "strengthen the capacity of countries to reduce hunger" into a goal of every strategic objective. A more prominent and integral role for capacity development will enable WFP to expand its contributions in this critical area while further aligning programmes with its core strengths and expertise. It will help to strike a clearer balance between providing assistance and enabling countries to meet their own needs.
- **Recognize the essential role of partnerships.** WFP's partnerships with national and sub-national governments, United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations, NGOs and the private sector are essential to achieving its mission. The next Strategic Plan will make working in partnership an explicit priority across the strategic objectives, helping to guide WFP's leadership and participation in the United Nations cluster system and lay the foundation for closer and more effective collaboration.
- **Focus and clarify objectives, goals and WFP's core strengths.** The next Strategic Plan will focus objectives and goals on key outcomes, based on relevant policies approved by the Board since 2008 and policies approved before 2008 that remain up to date. Focusing programme priorities and aligning them with current policies will take account of lessons learned, further clarify expectations among external stakeholders, give more precise direction to WFP staff at all levels and establish a strong foundation for measuring performance through the Strategic Results Framework.
- **Address nutritional needs across the strategic objectives.** Working with partners to fight undernutrition and ensure access to the right food at the right place and the right time will be a core priority of every strategic objective. Prioritizing the prevention and treatment of undernutrition in both emergency and non-emergency settings reflects critical lessons learned from the 2008 series in *The Lancet*²¹ and is consistent with the life-cycle approach set out in WFP's 2012 nutrition policy.²²
- **Advance gender equality.** The next Strategic Plan will highlight actions WFP is taking to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Based on a forthcoming gender analysis, it will meet or exceed the requirements of the System-Wide Action Plan for Implementation of the United Nations Chief Executives Board Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

by including at least one outcome specific to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Describing HOW WFP will do it

10. The next Strategic Plan will define how WFP will achieve its objectives and goals in today's complex and rapidly changing environment. It will outline actions WFP will take to better enable staff at all levels to implement strategic priorities, measure results and continuously improve quality and operational efficiency. Specifically, WFP will:

- **Deploy the right tools in the right place at the right time.** The next Strategic Plan will liberate the “main tools” anchored to specific strategic objectives in the current Strategic Plan, giving WFP staff the flexibility to select the appropriate mix of tools to achieve results according to context-specific needs on the ground. It envisions that tool selection will be based on an analysis of needs and context, beneficiary preferences, programme objectives and evidence. This adjustment recognizes that WFP's tools are already being appropriately applied to address multiple challenges across a variety of contexts. For example, school feeding programmes have been scaled up successfully to respond to sudden shocks, local procurement is now standard practice, and vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) informs programme design decisions in many types of operations.
- **Measure results.** WFP will deliver accountably and transparently, measure results against objectives and goals through the Strategic Results Framework and act on evidence of impact. It will capture and manage knowledge and lessons learned and adopt a culture of information-sharing and evidence-based decision-making to continuously improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of its programmes and operations. To accomplish these goals, it will continue to strengthen VAM and monitoring and evaluation tools, skills and capacities, working closely with research institutions and knowledge partners.
- **Enable effective implementation.** The next Strategic Plan will outline steps WFP will take to enable staff at all levels to achieve objectives and goals. Those steps will include updating policies, guidelines and procedures, adapting and streamlining internal systems and business practices, and building external and internal capacity to design and execute programmes, evaluate results, and identify, develop and maintain successful partnerships. A comprehensive communications strategy will be developed and executed to ensure staff and partners are aware of and understand the plan.

¹ See [United Nations System-Wide Action Plan for Implementation of the United Nations CEB Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#), pg. 8. Facilitated by UN Women. April 2012.

² See “[WFP Strategic Plan 2008–2013](#)”.

³ See “[Mid-Term Review of the WFP Strategic Plan \(2008–2013\)](#)”.

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- ⁴ See WFP. “Four Strategic Evaluations on the Transition from Food Aid to Food Assistance: A Synthesis”. 27 March 2012.
- ⁵ See Heltberg, R., Hossain, N. & Reva, A. 2012. *Living through Crises: How the Food, Fuel, and Financial Shocks Affect the Poor*. World Bank. Washington DC; and World Bank. 2010. *World Development Report: Development and Climate Change*. Washington DC.
- ⁶ See World Bank. 2011. *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development*. Washington DC.
- ⁷ More than 80 percent of the world’s population lacks access to social protection systems in any form. See *High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis: Comprehensive Framework for Action*. June 2008.
- ⁸ See World Bank. 2011. *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development*. Washington DC; and UNDP. 2012. *Governance for Peace: Securing the Social Contract*.
- ⁹ See Alinovi, L., Mane, E. & Romano, D. 2009. *Measuring Household Resilience to Food Insecurity: Application to Palestinian Households*. January.
- ¹⁰ See International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). 2012. *Reducing the Risk of Food and Nutrition Insecurity among Vulnerable Populations*.
- ¹¹ This concept note and outline use the definition of “resilience” found in the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015*. The Framework defines resilience as “the capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase this capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures.” See International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. Extracted from the final report of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (A/CONF.206/6), p.4.
- ¹² In the United States alone, more than eight new foundations and more than 160 new non-profits were created *every day* between 2007 and 2008. See Fulton, K. et al. 2010. *What’s Next for Philanthropy: Acting Bigger and Adapting Better in a Networked World*. Monitor Institute. p. 3.
- ¹³ See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2011. *Aid effectiveness 2005–10: Progress in Implementing the Paris Declaration*. Ch. 4 ‘Harmonisation of donor practices’. p. 61.
- ¹⁴ See Chandy, L. & Getz, G. 2011. *Poverty in Numbers: The Changing State of Global Poverty from 2005 to 2015*. Brookings Institute. Washington DC.
- ¹⁵ See Hoddinott, J., Maluccio, J., Behrman, J.R., Martorell, R., Melgar, P., Quisumbing, A.R., Ramirez-Zea, M., Stein, A.D. & Yount, K.M. 2011. *The Consequences of Early Childhood Growth Failure over the Life Course*. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01073. Washington DC.
- ¹⁶ See Crisp, J., Morris, T. & Refstie, H. 2012. *Displacement in urban areas: new challenges, new partnerships*. *Disasters*, 36: S23–S42.
- ¹⁷ See Department for International Development (DFID). 2011. *Multilateral Aid Review: Taking Forward the Findings of the United Kingdom Multilateral Aid Review*. March; and *The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action*. 2005, 2008.
- ¹⁸ See Birdsall, N., Savedoff, W., Mahgoub, A. & Vyborny, K. 2011. *Cash on delivery: a new approach to foreign aid*. Center for global development, washington dc; and *development impact bonds*. 2012. Centre for global development working group briefing note. May.
- ¹⁹ See “WFP Strategic Plan 2008–2013”, p.3, para. 2.
- ²⁰ See “WFP Mission Statement”.
- ²¹ See *The Lancet: Maternal and Child Undernutrition series*. UK. 2008.
- ²² See “WFP Nutrition Policy”. 2012.