

Moving forward on Protection – How WFP is building safer environments for beneficiaries

Objective

In the course of this year, nearly 132 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection. The UN and partner organisations aim to assist nearly 94 million of them. Conflict will remain the main cause of humanitarian and protection needs in 2019, and in turn, these needs are driven wholly or in part by protection threats and their effects on people's lives and livelihoods. The analysis of protection issues is fraught with difficulties related to the sensitivity of the topic, access constraints, and imperative to "do no harm" when collecting and reporting on protection threats and effects. However, we know that to protect people is to uphold their dignity and integrity, and where the humanitarian community fails to do this, suffering is prolonged and recovery postponed.

Against this background of urgency and with the clock ticking for many beneficiaries, this event is positioned one year after the Protection Evaluation was presented to the Executive Board with clear recommendations. While the evaluation acknowledged achievements, it argued that there was still considerable room for improvement and called for higher levels of management engagement in protection-related themes. An outcome of these findings was for WFP to revamp its protection strategy and start working towards renewing and extending its current protection policy. WFP has indeed made measurable progress in the proposed areas. A new strategy outline was developed, protection-related indicators are reflected in the CRF and with a slightly larger team, WFP has started putting the emerging strategy into practice. WFP has collected specific financial support from countries such as Switzerland, Sweden and the US to move forward in these various areas. But of course, more has to be done.

Consequently, this event is designed to (1) illustrate the importance, indeed urgency, of protection to humanitarian action in general and WFP's mandate in particular, (2) and show-case WFP's progress towards building a potent strategy for action in the area of protection. In doing so, particular challenges will be highlighted and discussed.

The event will draw linkages between integrating protection and other areas central to ensuring the rights of affected people, including accountability to affected populations, identity management and gender, to demonstrate how these areas are mutually supportive and complementary and are becoming part of a new way forward for WFP to embrace a more holistic approach to engaging with affected people. As such, it will consider how the delivery of food security and nutrition programmes contributes to the safety, dignity, and integrity of those we serve – the essential preconditions for peaceful societies. It will however not shy away from looking at areas where challenges remain, such as how Access and Protection can be brought together. A key concept will be to discuss Protection in terms of risk management for beneficiaries and link this to the recent and on-going discussions on corporate risk management.

Outcomes

Event outcomes will serve to:

- illustrate that Protection remains an important area for the entire humanitarian sector, WFP included;
- illustrate how WFP has made substantial progress in protection over the last 12 months in the field and is moving towards a coherent strategic framework / policy that will inform its general operational outlook;
- critically discuss contentious areas and challenges in implementing protection across its broad programmatic reach.

Format

The side event will bring together selected WFP Directors at various levels to chart WFP's progress in the area of protection, how this relates to the organisation's planned trajectory in this area and highlight areas that remain challenging. It will be introduced by a series of short, but well-illustrated presentations before moving to its essence in the form podium discussion. Towards the end of the event, the floor will be opened for questions from event participants. The event will be chaired and moderated by Switzerland and follows the side event on Sweden's event on the Triple Nexus to which it will establish linkages. A light breakfast will be provided.