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Update on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 (repositioning the United Nations development system)

1. This information note builds on the update presented to the Executive Board in November at its 2019 second regular session¹ by providing additional information on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279² on repositioning the United Nations development system (UNDS).

Introduction

2. January 2020 marks one year into the transition to the new resident coordinator system as well as ten years until the deadline for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations Secretary-General in September 2019 called for a "Decade of Action" to accelerate sustainable solutions to all the world's biggest challenges —from zero hunger to climate change to inequality and the finance gap. United Nations development system reform has been leading the United Nations system's efforts to reposition itself to help deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As part of those efforts WFP continues to implement the latest components of the reform, including the new United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks (UNSDCFs), while working closely with newly empowered resident coordinators and the entirety of the United Nations country team and strive to increase its effectiveness and efficiency.

¹ WFP/EB.2/2019/4-F.

² General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/72/279).

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3. WFP is also participating in other aspects of UNDS reform, including the regional and multi-country-office reviews. The year 2020 will offer a chance to reflect on the rollout of reform pilot projects and to make necessary adjustments, including with regard to the country-level management and accountability framework. In the latter half of the year the General Assembly will conduct the latest quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of United Nations system operational activities to further guide the direction of the development system towards 2030. WFP looks forward to engaging with entities of the United Nations sustainable development group and Member States in the development of the next QCPR.

Strengthening system-wide support for the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda at the country level

4. Following discussions between WFP, Member States and the Executive Board, WFP will no longer prepare concept notes as part of the process for the development of country strategic plans (CSPs). This was agreed to in consideration of the limited time available for the preparation of UNSDCFs. This streamlined process will continue until mid-2021, at which time it will be reviewed. This year will see 16 countries (in 12 of which WFP has a presence) developing or beginning to implement UNSDCFs, with a further 37 (in 21 of which WFP has a presence) planning to develop or begin to implement in 2021.³
5. Entities of the United Nations sustainable development group (UNSDG) have developed a series of internal technical “companion pieces” on the following topics: guiding principles underpinning UNSDCFs; United Nations country team configuration; funding UNSDCFs and financing the 2030 Agenda; economic transformation; programme design and management; United Nations common country analyses (CCAs); and development, humanitarian and peace collaboration. WFP participated in the development of the companion pieces, drafts of which were circulated to resident coordinators and United Nations country teams in January 2020 to facilitate the preparation of UNSDCFs and CCAs. The Development Coordination Office (DCO) is combining the seven companion pieces into a coherent package tailored for teams in the field. The package is expected to be ready by June 2020 and to be revisited in 2021, underscoring the transitional nature of current rollout efforts. To accelerate UNDS reform, all United Nations country teams are expected to update their CCAs in 2020. To that end, WFP issued preliminary guidance for country offices and established a help desk for responding to queries from the field.
6. Given the various contexts in which WFP operates, including mission settings, WFP is updating the guidance in its revised emergency pocket book (known as the Blue Book) and supporting WFP country directors’ engagement in the United Nations planning of transitions from peacekeeping missions to political missions, as well as advocating United Nations country team involvement in this process, while also using the CCA as a platform for the assessment of transitions.
7. The Joint SDG Fund concluded its first round of funding for joint programmes in the fourth quarter of 2019, and at the end of December it launched its second call for joint proposals. First round proposals focused on social protection, specifically on “leaving no one behind,” and the Fund disbursed USD 70 million for 35 joint programmes, including USD 8.5 million for WFP activities in 13 joint programmes. The second call for proposals, which will last until mid-March 2020, aims to support joint proposals from participating United Nations country teams aimed at scaling up innovative development financing models.

³ The full breakdown of countries is available at this address: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-implementation>.

Supporting the United Nations resident coordinator system

8. With nearly one year of experience in implementing the provisional country-level management and accountability framework (MAF), WFP will play an active role in contributing to its review. The regional and global chapters of the MAF meanwhile will be developed after the regional review is concluded. While originally scheduled for the end of 2019, the regional and multi-country-office review consultations have carried into 2020, consequently pushing back the anticipated MAF review. No timeline for the MAF review or for the development of its regional and global chapters has yet been released, but they will probably begin after the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) operational activities for development segment, which is scheduled for May 2020.
9. In January 2020 DCO began leading a process for developing a transitional performance appraisal system for evaluating the performance of United Nations country teams and resident coordinators for 2020, which is expected to be rolled out later in 2020. WFP and other UNSDG members have provided feedback on draft documents and will engage with DCO throughout the process. Several agencies, including WFP, suggested that the appraisal system used in 2019 be a “light” system, with simplified mechanics, and that the lessons learned from 2019 appraisals be taken into account in the development and use of the final appraisal system.
10. As of December 2019 there were four resident coordinators that were former staff members of WFP. As part of the resident coordination system’s funding structure, WFP continues to implement the 1 percent coordination levy in accordance with the applicable guidance. By 31 December 2019 WFP had transferred USD 294,000 generated by the levy to the special purpose trust fund for the resident coordinator system. Two donors, the European Union and Sweden, have announced that they will self-administer the levy, while most donors have indicated that they wish the receiving agencies to administer it.⁴ WFP’s 2019 transactional and administrative costs associated with the levy are estimated to be USD 30,000. In most cases, donors have elected to calculate the 1 percent on the basis of the grant only, rather than the grant plus 1 percent, thus reducing the amount contributed directly to programming.
11. To further fund the new resident coordinator system, the UNSDG is contributing USD 75 million in annual cost sharing. WFP has paid its portion of this cost sharing for 2020 (USD 2.9 million) to the special purpose trust fund. WFP looks forward to the planned review of the resident coordinator system’s hybrid funding model, including the cost sharing formula and 1 percent coordination levy, by the UNSDG towards the end of 2020, at which time there will be nearly two years’ worth of data on its implementation.
12. In line with requests from the Executive Board, WFP is working closely with DCO and United Nations partners to harmonize indicators, methodologies and metrics for reporting on Funding Compact commitments. This is important for coherent reporting to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) for system-wide targets and for consistent approaches to agency-specific reporting across governing bodies. An updated report on the status of the indicators for the Funding Compact is included as an annex to this update.

Advancing shared business operations

13. WFP, along with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, continues to co-lead the UNSDG’s Business Innovations Strategic Results Group (BIG). The inter-agency BIG has been tasked with building on proposals for maximizing programmatic gains through efficient and high-quality back office operations for United Nations country teams. With

⁴ According to data available on the special purpose trust fund website: <https://soc.un.org/sptf/Levy.html>.

regard to the target of all United Nations country teams having business operations strategies in place by 2021, selected WFP staff are attending regional training-of-trainers workshops organized by DCO. Moreover, WFP has developed internal business operations strategy guidelines for field offices. Training for business operations strategy focal points from country offices will take place in the near future. Using the business operations strategy as a foundation, the common back office model, with clear guidance for efficiency gains reporting, is expected to be completed by mid-2020.

Enhancing United Nations regional support for the 2030 Agenda

14. Two major outstanding elements of the UNDS reform, the regional review and the multi-country-office review, are advancing towards further proposals for necessary adjustments to the United Nations' regional development system. The adjustments are needed to improve coherence at the regional level and United Nations support for countries covered by multi-country-office arrangements. To that end, the regional review and the multi-country-office review have had dedicated internal working groups of United Nations entities to work through some of the Secretary-General's proposals from his April 2019 report to ECOSOC on repositioning the United Nations development system.⁵ WFP has been an active participant in both internal working groups. The internal review team (IRT) for the regional review, chaired by the Secretary-General's Special Advisor on United Nations reform, is working on the Secretary-General's recommendations for the regional review and its potential governance and the functions and working methods of the proposed regional collaborative platform. WFP's Deputy Executive Director participated in all meetings of the IRT in the latter half of 2019, and WFP regional directors have been closely engaged throughout the regional discussions. The IRT concluded its discussions and submitted its recommendations to the Secretary-General in December 2019. The recommendations will be used by the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General as a basis for further discussion of the regional collaborative platform proposals during three consultations with ECOSOC Member States in the first quarter 2020 (the first of which took place on 30 January 2020 in New York). Following these consultations, the Secretary-General is expected to outline the regional review proposals in his report to the ECOSOC operational affairs segment for development activities scheduled for mid-May 2020.
15. Like the regional review, the multi-country-office review is following a parallel track of internal United Nations discussions, with an inter-agency working group running alongside intergovernmental consultations with Member States led by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The inter-agency working group, which WFP followed, completed its deliberations in December 2019 and submitted its recommendations to the Secretary-General for further Member State consultation in the lead-up to the ECOSOC operational affairs segment for development activities.

Conclusions and next steps

16. The Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals was launched by the Secretary-General in the lead-up to 2030. How we achieve the SDGs in the coming years will require transformational shifts in the way we work together and deliver results. WFP and all relevant actors are called on to focus on accelerating progress towards achieving zero hunger. Meanwhile, WFP will continue to engage actively in the reform process.

⁵ Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019 (A/74/73-E/2019/14).

ANNEX

MEMBER STATES' RELATED COMMITMENTS				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
Aligning funding to entity requirements				
1. To increase core resources for the United Nations development system	Core share of voluntary funding for development-related activities	Baseline 2017: 19.4% Target 2023: 30%	Core funding to WFP as a share of overall revenue: 2018: 6% (Data includes all WFP funding, both humanitarian and development).	Core funding to WFP as a share of overall revenue: 2019 = 5% (Data includes all funding to WFP, both humanitarian and development).
	Core share of funding for development-related activities (including assessed contributions)	Baseline 2017: 27% Target 2023: 30%	WFP receives no assessed contributions.	WFP receives no assessed contributions.
2. To double the share of non-core contributions that are provided through development-related pooled and thematic funds	% of non-core resources for development-related activities channelled through inter-agency pooled funds	Baseline 2017: 5% Target 2023: 10%	Share of WFP non-core resources channelled through inter-agency pooled funds: 2018: 3.5% (Data includes all WFP funding, both humanitarian and development).	Share of WFP non-core resources channelled through inter-agency pooled funds: 2019 = 3.2% (Data includes all funding to WFP, both humanitarian and development).
	% of non-core resources for development-related activities channelled through single agency thematic funds	Baseline 2017: 3% Target 2023: 6%	WFP has no thematic funding instruments.	WFP has no thematic funding instruments.

MEMBER STATES' RELATED COMMITMENTS				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
Providing stability				
3. To broaden the sources of funding support to the United Nations development system	Number of United Nations sustainable development group (UNSDG) entities reporting an annual increase in the number of contributors of voluntary core resources	Baseline 2017: 66% Target 2023: 100%	Number of government partners contributing core resources: 2018: 36%	Number of government partners contributing core resources: 2019 – 40%
	Number of Member State contributors to development-related inter-agency pooled funds and single agency thematic funds	Baseline 2017: 59 and 27% Target 2023: 100 and 50%	WFP does not administer any pooled funds and has no thematic funding instruments.	WFP does not administer any pooled funds and has no thematic funding instruments.
4. To provide predictable funding for the specific requirements of UNSDG entities as articulated in their strategic plans and for United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF) funding needs at the country level	Funding gaps in UNSDG strategic plan financing frameworks	Baseline (2018); TBD Target (2021); TBD	In 2018 WFP received USD 7.3 billion against total requirements of 10.5 billion, or 70%.	In 2019 WFP received USD 8.1 billion against total requirements of 12.6 billion, or 64%.

MEMBER STATES' RELATED COMMITMENTS				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
	Fraction of United Nations development system entities indicating that at least 50% of their contributions are part of multi-year commitments	Baseline 2017: 12/25 or 48% Target 2023: 100%	Percentage of 2018 WFP revenue that is multi-year: 14% Percentage of 2018 WFP revenue that has a duration longer than one year: 76.8%	Percentage of 2019 WFP revenue that is multi-year: 17% Percentage of 2019 WFP revenue that has a duration longer than one year: 74.9%
Facilitating coherence and efficiency				
7. To fully comply with cost recovery rates as approved by governing bodies	Average number of cost recovery support fee waivers granted per United Nations development system entity per year	Baseline 2017: to be confirmed Target 2019 onwards: 0%	Number of indirect support cost waivers granted by WFP in 2018: 28 for a total value of USD 1.03 million.	Number of indirect support cost waivers granted by WFP in 2019: 152, for a total value of USD 1.6 million. (Please note these are preliminary figures; final figures will be reported at the 2020 annual session of the Board).

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
Accelerating results on the ground				
2. To increase collaboration on joint and independent system-wide evaluation products to improve United Nations support on the ground	% of UNSDG evaluation offices engaging in joint or independent system-wide evaluations	Baseline 2018: 29% (joint evaluation), 20% (independent system-wide evaluations) Target 2021: 75% (joint evaluation), 50% (independent system-wide evaluations)	In 2018, WFP completed five joint evaluations and another five were ongoing. WFP is also engaged in one inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of the response to El Niño in Ethiopia.	At the decentralized level, WFP was involved in nine joint evaluations in 2019, of which three were completed as of the end of 2019 (Colombia, Eswatini and India). In addition WFP's Office of Evaluation was actively engaged in the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation (IAHE) of the drought response in Ethiopia, which was completed in 2019, as well as in the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of the response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique and the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The IAHEs for Cyclone Idai and gender and empowerment are still ongoing. Finally, preparation of the joint evaluation of Rome-based agency collaboration started late in 2019 and will continue in 2020.

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
Improving transparency and accountability				
6. To strengthen the clarity of entity-specific strategic plans and integrated results and resource frameworks and their annual reporting on results against expenditures	% of UNSDG entities that in their governing bodies held structured dialogues in the past year on how to finance the development results agreed in the new strategic plan cycle	Baseline 2017: 62% Target 2021: 100%	WFP strategic plans and corporate results frameworks are approved by WFP's Executive Board. The discussions on these documents, among others, include dialogues with the Board on financing WFP's development results.	In addition to the issue of financing development results being central to the strategic plan and corporate results framework, in 2019 WFP discussed the issue with Board members during the Board's 2019 annual session and during informal consultations on the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network, the partnerships and engagement strategy for non-governmental entities (the updated private partnerships strategy) and WFP's local food procurement strategy.

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
7. To strengthen entity and system-wide transparency and reporting, linking resources to SDG results	% of UNDS entities individually submitting financial data to the Chief Executives Board for Coordination	Baseline 2017: 69% Target 2021: 100%	Yes	First report in 2008
	% of UNDS entities publishing data in accordance with the highest international transparency standards	Baseline 2017: 36% Target 2021: 100%	Yes	First report to the International Aid Transparency Initiative in June 2014
	% of UNDS entities with ongoing activities at the country level that report expenditures disaggregated by country for the Chief Executives Board for Coordination baseline	Baseline 2017: 46% Target 2021: 100%	Yes	First report in 2008
	% of UNDS entities that report on expenditures disaggregated by SDG	Baseline 2017: 20% Target 2021: 100%	Yes	First report on 17 May 2019

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
9. To increase accessibility of corporate evaluations and internal audit reports in accordance with the disclosure provisions and policies set by governing bodies at the time of report issuance	% of UNDS entities that have made their corporate evaluations available on the United Nations Evaluation Group website in accordance with their disclosure provisions and policies	Baseline 2018: 21% Target 2021: 100%	100% of WFP centralized and decentralized evaluation reports are published on WFP websites. In addition, those that meet or exceed quality requirements are uploaded onto the United Nations Evaluation Group and Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action websites, ensuring wide dissemination of evaluation results to both humanitarian and development communities at the global level.	In accordance with WFP evaluation policy commitments, all centralized and decentralized evaluation reports are published on WFP websites upon final approval of the reports. In addition, those that meet or exceed quality requirements are uploaded on to the United Nations Evaluation Group and Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action websites, ensuring wide dissemination of evaluation results to both the humanitarian and development communities at the global level. Additional efforts are made to contribute to maximizing evaluation use, including by organizing learning events and developing tailored evaluation products for specific audiences.

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
	% of internal audit reports issued in line with the disclosure provisions and policies set by the relevant governing bodies, which are available on a dedicated searchable United Nations Representatives of Internal Audit Services website, pending availability of resources	Baseline 2018: 0 Target 2019: 100%	Since 2013, WFP's internal audit reports are externally available at https://www.wfp.org/audit-inspection-reports .	Since 2013 WFP's internal audit reports have been externally available at https://www.wfp.org/audit-inspection-reports . The United Nations Representatives of Internal Audit Services platform is not yet in place.
10. To increase the visibility of results for contributors of voluntary core resources, pooled and thematic funds and for programme country contributions	Specific mention of voluntary core, pooled and thematic fund contributors and programme country contributions in United Nations country team annual results reporting and entity-specific country and global reporting	Baseline 2018: n/a Target 2020: Yes	These contributions are highlighted in WFP's annual performance report, in each annual country report and in an annual corporate report on flexible contributions.	WFP uses its annual reporting exercise (both the global annual performance report and individual annual country reports) to highlight results from voluntary contributions.
	Specific mention of individual contributors in all results reporting by pooled fund and thematic fund administrators and UNSDG recipients	Baseline 2018: n/a Target 2020: Yes	WFP does not administer any pooled funds or thematic funds.	WFP does not administer any pooled funds or thematic funds.

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES				
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline	WFP 2019 data
Increasing efficiencies				
11. To implement the Secretary-General's goals on operational consolidation for efficiency gains	% of UNSDG entities that report to their governing bodies on efficiency gains	Baseline 2017: 41% Target 2021: 100%	WFP has consistently reported on a series of efficiency gain measures in its annual performance report since 2015.	WFP has been including the information on efficiency gains in its annual reporting since 2015 and continues to refine the related analysis.
	% of UNSDG entities that have signed the high-level statement of mutual recognition	Baseline 2018: 28% Target 2021: 100%	WFP signed the high-level statement of mutual recognition in November 2018.	WFP signed the high-level statement of mutual recognition in November 2018.
12. To fully implement and report on approved cost-recovery policies and rates	% of UNSDG entities that report annually on the implementation of their approved cost recovery policies and rates to their governing bodies	Baseline 2017: 51% Target 2021: 100%	WFP reports annually on the implementation of its approved cost recovery policies and rates to the Executive Board through the management plan.	WFP reports annually to the Executive Board, through the management plan, on the implementation of its approved cost recovery policies and rates.

Acronyms

CCA	common country analysis
DCO	Development Coordination Office
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
MAF	provisional country-level management and accountability framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDS	United Nations development system
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework
UNSDG	United Nations sustainable development group