

# **WFP gender policy (2022–2026)**

## **Annotated Draft**



**First informal consultation**

**8 July 2021**

**World Food Programme  
Rome, Italy**

# How the other Sustainable Development Goals affect gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5)<sup>1</sup>



Globally, there are 122 women age 25–34 living in extreme poverty for every 100 men of the same age group living in extreme poverty.

Women are up to 11 percentage points more likely than men to report food insecurity.



In 2012, finances flowing out of developing countries were 2.5 times as much as the aid flowing in, and gender allocations paled in comparison.



In times of conflict, rates of homicide and other forms of violent crime increase significantly. During conflict, while men are more likely to be killed on the battlefield, women are subjected to sexual violence and abducted, tortured and forced to leave their homes.



Between 2010 and 2015, the world lost 3.3 million hectares of forest. Poor rural women depend on common pool resources and are especially affected by this depletion.



The contamination of freshwater and marine ecosystems negatively affects the livelihoods and health of women and men and the health of their children.



Globally, 303,000 women and girls died from pregnancy-related causes in 2015. The rate of death is declining much too slowly to achieve SDG Target 3.1.



The 2030 Agenda promises to put an end to barriers that prevent women and girls from realizing their full potential, but significant challenges lie ahead:

- 5.1. In 18 countries, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working.
- 5.4. Women do 2.6 times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men do.
- 5.5. Women hold just 23.7 percent of parliamentary seats, an increase of 10 percentage points compared with 2000 – but still well below parity.
- 5.6. Only 52 percent of women who are married or in a union freely make their own decisions about sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care.
- 5.a. Globally, women comprise just 13 percent of agricultural land holders.
- 5.b. Women are less likely than men to own a mobile phone, and their internet usage is 5.9 percentage points lower than that of men.
- g; in 39 countries, daughters and sons do not have equal inheritance rights; and 49 countries lack laws protecting women from domestic violence.
- 5.2. 19 percent of women and girls age 15–49 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the past 12 months.
- 5.3. Globally, 750 million women and girls were married before the age of 18 and at least 200 million women and girls in 30 countries have undergone female genital mutilation.



Climate change has a disproportionate impact on women and children, who are 14 times as likely as men to die during a disaster.



Investment in public transportation yields large benefits for women, who tend to rely on public transport more than men do.

15 million girls of primary school age will never get the chance to learn to read or write in primary school compared with 10 million boys



Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 80 percent of households without access to water on the premises.



Indoor air pollution from using combustible fuels for household energy caused 4.3 million deaths in 2012, with women and girls accounting for six out of every ten deaths.



Women living in urban slums endure many hardships, with basic needs such as access to clean water and improved sanitation facilities often going unmet.



Up to 30 percent of income inequality is due to inequality within households, including between women and men. Women are also more likely than men to live on less than 50 percent of the median income.



Women represent 28.8 percent of researchers worldwide. Only about one out of five countries has achieved gender parity in this area.

The global gender pay gap is 23 percent. Women's labour force participation rate is 63 percent, while that of men is 94 percent.

<sup>1</sup> UN Women 2018. *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

## Introduction

1. The WFP Gender Policy (2015–2020), approved in 2015, provides the organization with a corporate framework for achieving gender equality objectives relevant to its mandate and the fragile contexts in which it operates. This policy update covers the period 2022–2026, building on lessons learned from the 2015–2020 implementation period, which include good practices from the field and innovative gender-transformative approaches, developed and implemented in coordination with local actors, that respond to the differentiated needs of women, girls, men and boys, are adapted to local contexts and support humanitarian, development and peacebuilding objectives. It reflects the findings and recommendations of an [external evaluation of the WFP Gender Policy \(2015–2020\)](#),<sup>2</sup> with which management agreed, and is aligned with other WFP policies.
2. Developed at a time when the world is facing growing needs due to protracted conflicts, climate change and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the WFP gender policy (2022–2026), aims to accelerate WFP’s efforts to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) in all of its work. Those efforts also inform WFP’s ongoing process to develop its next strategic plan, for the period 2022–2026, which is scheduled for review by the Board in November 2022.
3. In recognition of the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment in both saving lives and changing lives, WFP is committed to designing and implementing strategies that bring about transformational change in the lives of women, girls, boys and men as it works to achieve a world of zero hunger.<sup>3</sup>

## Purpose and rationale

4. Zero hunger cannot be achieved in a world where stark inequalities persist in terms of access to sufficient good-quality food, markets and resources such as income, land, knowledge and information and communications technology. WFP seeks a world where all people have equal opportunities, equal access to resources and benefits and equal voice in the decisions that shape their lives, including in their households, communities and societies.
5. Gender equality and women’s empowerment are preconditions for effective and sustainable peace and development and the fulfilment of human rights. All programmes and policies must therefore be designed, implemented and monitored in ways that support women, girls, men and boys in their full diversity in reaching their potential.<sup>4</sup> This requires that interventions be based on sound intersectional gender analysis to ensure that they are effective and inclusive and to reduce the risk that they fail to reach a large part of the population or respond appropriately to specific needs or underlying social norms based on

---

<sup>2</sup> WFP. 2020. *Evaluation of the Gender Policy (2015–2020)*. [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000116033/download/?\\_ga=2.75689109.168753031.1620543684-163899262.1620543684](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000116033/download/?_ga=2.75689109.168753031.1620543684-163899262.1620543684).

<sup>3</sup> The policy reaffirms and builds on the centrality to WFP’s work of a gender-transformative approach that seeks to transform unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources and decision making between women and men in their full diversity and to foster gender equality and women’s empowerment. For WFP, gender-transformative assistance involves promoting the design and implementation of policies and programmes that recognize the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment in achieving positive development outcomes and promoting universal human rights. Critical to this work is the transformation of the underlying social structures, systems and norms that perpetuate gender inequalities and promotion of the empowerment of women and other marginalized groups.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this policy document, the phrase “women, girls, men and boys” is used to refer to “women and men of [...] diverse backgrounds, understanding that sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, disability, belief, civic and economic status, norms and cultural and traditional practices can be barriers or enablers depending on context; and [...] different experiences, understanding that experiences of marginalization are heterogenous.” Inter-Agency Standing Committee. 2018. *Guidelines. The gender handbook for humanitarian action*. Box A1, p. 17. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-09/The%20Gender%20Handbook%20for%20Humanitarian%20Action.pdf>.

gender roles that contribute to the creation or perpetuation of gender inequalities. Such operations can even expose beneficiaries to additional risks, including life threatening gender-based violence.

6. Men and boys are beneficiaries as well as partners in gender equality. It is important that men and boys be given the opportunity to advocate gender equality and showcase positive forms of masculinity, including the benefits of men's engagement in caregiving and of enhancing the capacities of all generations of men and boys with regard to inclusive engagement at the household, community and policy levels in all sectors of society .

## SCOPE

7. WFP is unequivocally committed to delivering in partnership with others to promote and protect human rights and gender equality as recognized in the 1945 [United Nations Charter](#),<sup>5</sup> the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#),<sup>6</sup> the Beijing+25 outcomes and other [declarations and agreements](#).<sup>7</sup> WFP complies with the 2018 United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP 2.0).<sup>8</sup>
8. While the structure, objectives and commitment of the previous gender policy remain valid, this updated policy adopts a more progressive approach in line with the leave no one behind pledge of the 2030 Agenda and the latest global trends and discussions on gender equality and women's empowerment;<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup>strengthens the accountability of WFP country offices by firmly positioning their work within United Nations efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with gender equality being central to the success of all SDGs; defines the conditions necessary for WFP to sustain progress in programming its operations; and presents a revised theory of change that emphasizes the links between organizational processes and policy objectives that aim for more transformative change.<sup>11</sup>
9. This updated policy seeks to account for the multiple and overlapping factors that contribute to discrimination based on age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geographic area, migratory status, forced displacement, HIV/AIDS status and other characteristics. Only through such an intersectional approach can existing barriers be dismantled and societies transformed.

---

<sup>5</sup> United Nations. 1945. *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice*. San Francisco, USA. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations. 2015. *Transforming our world. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN-Women). Intergovernmental mandates on gender mainstreaming. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/intergovernmentalmandates.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> UN-Women. Promoting UN accountability. (UN-SWAP and UNCT-SWAP). <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>.

<sup>9</sup> For example, *Action Coalitions: A Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality* of the Generation Equality Forum ([https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/AC\\_Acceleration%20Plan.Final%20Draft%20%28March%2030%29\\_EN.pdf](https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/AC_Acceleration%20Plan.Final%20Draft%20%28March%2030%29_EN.pdf)) calls for accelerated action on six themes: Gender-based violence; economic justice and rights; bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights; feminist action for climate justice; technology and innovation for gender equality; and feminist movements and leadership. The United Nations Decade of Action calls for accelerating sustainable solutions to all the world's biggest challenges, ranging from poverty and gender issues to climate change, inequality and closing the finance gap (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/>).

<sup>10</sup> Recommendations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council 2021 to the leaders of the G7. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/992410/RECOMMENDATIONS\\_OF\\_THE\\_GENDER\\_EQUALITY\\_ADVISORY\\_COUNCIL\\_2021\\_TO\\_THE\\_LEADERS\\_OF\\_THE\\_G7.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/992410/RECOMMENDATIONS_OF_THE_GENDER_EQUALITY_ADVISORY_COUNCIL_2021_TO_THE_LEADERS_OF_THE_G7.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> See the evaluation of the gender policy for a comprehensive list of recommendations. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000115593/download/>.

10. The policy lays out the strategic direction and defines the necessary changes and minimum standards for ensuring gender equality in all types of WFP intervention. As the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, WFP has a unique opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to humanitarian, development and peace objectives<sup>12</sup> through gender-transformative and conflict-sensitive programming that leverages local and strategic partnerships and contributes to reducing vulnerabilities, risks and needs while addressing conflict-related factors that create or perpetuate gender inequality.<sup>13</sup> The policy foresees programming that is based on an understanding of local settings and is promoted through empowered local actors.<sup>14</sup> The policy will therefore be complemented by:
- revision of regional gender strategies and gender action plans aligned with country strategic plans;
  - revision of tools for and guidance on addressing gender considerations, bringing them into line with this updated policy and providing technical guidance on mainstreaming gender into all WFP programmes; and
  - disseminating the policy to employees, partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders in ways that foster ownership of and accountability for policy implementation.
11. The policy is based on consultations with WFP employees in all categories and geographical regions and a comprehensive review of research on the links between gender and food security and nutrition. Its formulation has benefited from the input of external and internal reference groups and two presentations to WFP Executive Board stakeholders. This bottom-up and participatory approach helped to ensure that the policy reflects WFP's collective voice. The gender policy is addressed to all WFP employees and aims to ensure that they understand their own roles and responsibilities in its implementation.

## Context analysis

12. The world is not on track to achieve zero hunger by 2030, as amply demonstrated in the analysis carried out during the elaboration of WFP's strategic plan for 2022–2026. The number of acutely food-insecure people increased from 80 million in 2015 to 135 million in 2019 and spiked to 270 million in late 2020, fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Two billion people – one in every four people worldwide – do not have reliable access to sufficient food that is nutritious and safe.<sup>15</sup> Women face exclusion in various ways that expose them and their children to greater risk of food insecurity and malnutrition;<sup>16</sup> 60 percent of food insecure people are women and girls, and on every continent food insecurity is more prevalent among women than among men.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Also known as the triple nexus, this involves humanitarian, development and peace actors working together towards collective outcomes. See WFP. 2019. *Triple nexus: WFP's contributions to peace*. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000111108/download/>.

<sup>13</sup> WFP. 2021. *Review of Progress on Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG) into the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus Agenda*. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/review-progress-mainstreaming-gender-equality-and-empowerment-women-and-girls-geewg>.

<sup>14</sup> In accordance with the localization agenda, this entails respecting, supporting and strengthening local leadership and capacity, including women-led organizations and organizations advancing gender equality at the local level.

<sup>15</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP and World Health Organization. 2020. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020: Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/state-food-security-and-nutrition-world-sofi-report-2020>.

<sup>16</sup> 2021 GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISES [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000127343/download/?\\_ga=2.166880126.1523050187.1623934142-836163900.1544251399](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000127343/download/?_ga=2.166880126.1523050187.1623934142-836163900.1544251399)

<sup>17</sup> [World Food Day 2019 - nutrition label infographic.pdf-60 PERCENT.pdf](#).

13. Women and girls continue to suffer higher job losses, shrinking work hours and greater care burdens as a result of COVID-19,<sup>18</sup> and the pandemic triggered a rise in cases of gender-based violence of such magnitude that the International Rescue Committee has termed it the “shadow pandemic”.<sup>19 20</sup>
14. Furthermore, discriminatory gender norms are exacerbating the conditions and social position of women and girls. Globally, women perform three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men; although men have been undertaking more care tasks during COVID-19, the world is **92 years away** from achieving equality in unpaid care work between men and women according to the 2021 [State of the World's Fathers](#) report.<sup>21</sup>
15. Countries ranking highest on the index of global hunger are also those where gender-related inequalities are most severe. Each year, 15 million girls get married before the age of 18, equating to 28 girls every minute. More than 700 million women alive today were married when they were under the age of 18.
16. Although there has been progress in women’s access to financial services and technology, there is still a gap. About one billion women do not have formal financial services, due to persistent barriers in access to identification documents, mobile phones, digital skills and financial capability, as well as inappropriate products and more.<sup>22</sup>
17. Women are more frequently excluded from access to productive resources, services, technology, assets, financing and decision making than men. Women’s access to public leadership positions – in politics, key professions, the private sector and academia – remains limited. Yet, with access to productive resources, markets, training and technology women can play a key role in achieving SDG 2.

## Generation Equality: Realizing women’s rights for an equal future<sup>23</sup>

---

*Imagine a world where all people have equal rights and opportunities. Women and girls are not afraid of walking home late at night, and men and boys are not trapped in oppressive masculinities. In this world, gender equality is the norm. Men and women get paid equally for work of equal value and share the care work at home.*

---



---

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and United Nations Development Programme. 2020. [The Covid-19 boomerang effect](#): New forecasts predict sharp increases in female poverty. <https://data.unwomen.org/features/covid-19-boomerang-effect-new-forecasts-predict-sharp-increases-female-poverty>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/document/2247/theshadowpandemicbangladesh.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/statement-ed-phumzile-violence-against-women-during-pandemic>; <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2020/4/infographic-covid19-violence-against-women-and-girls>

<sup>21</sup> STATE OF THE WORLD'S FATHERS 2021 [210610\\_BLS21042\\_PRO\\_SOWF.v08.pdf-FATHERS- MenCare.pdf](#)

<sup>22</sup> [https://btca-production-site.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/482/english\\_attachments/\\_Advancing\\_Womens\\_Digital\\_Financial\\_Inclusion\\_G20\\_GPFI.pdf?1606113263](https://btca-production-site.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/482/english_attachments/_Advancing_Womens_Digital_Financial_Inclusion_G20_GPFI.pdf?1606113263); [https://www.g20-insights.org/policy\\_briefs/bridging-the-gender-digital-gap/](https://www.g20-insights.org/policy_briefs/bridging-the-gender-digital-gap/); [https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/WomensDigitalFinancialInclusioninAfrica\\_English.pdf](https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/WomensDigitalFinancialInclusioninAfrica_English.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/beijing-plus-25>.



18. Progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment is being eroded by the “3 Cs” – conflict, climate change and COVID-19. Based on projections by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Development Programme, the economic effects of COVID-19 are expected to push an additional 47 million women and girls into extreme poverty in 2021, reversing decades of progress.
19. Hunger cannot be reduced or eliminated solely through the provision of adequate food: the multiple dimensions of empowerment – the factors experienced by individuals that establish equality – need to be understood and addressed for SDG 2 to be achieved.

**Figure 1: Solution: creating a virtuous cycle**



### **Gender equality and women’s empowerment in WFP’s work**

20. WFP is well suited to promoting the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women in all its work. Its strengths include the ability to scale operations up or down and to reach beneficiaries as both a deliverer of its own programmes and an enabler of partners’ programmes, which enables it to steer the integration of gender equality into a whole-of-society response to the needs of people in diverse operational settings, including through country capacity strengthening; *substantial partnerships* with competent and longstanding actors in field of gender, which facilitate complementarity and collaborative efforts to achieve gender equality; *strategic positioning*, which enables WFP to elevate the gender dimension in key thematic discussions such as those related to the COVID-19 socioeconomic response, the forthcoming United Nations food systems summit and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; effective leadership of coordination and collaboration mechanisms and processes for integrating gender throughout humanitarian and development work; and innovative and task-driven approaches to leading change and transformations.
21. Figure 2 provides examples of what advancing gender equality might entail for WFP. It illustrates a gender perspective on WFP’s mandate to save and change lives by delivering and enabling assistance and development programmes.

Figure 2: Gender equality and women's empowerment

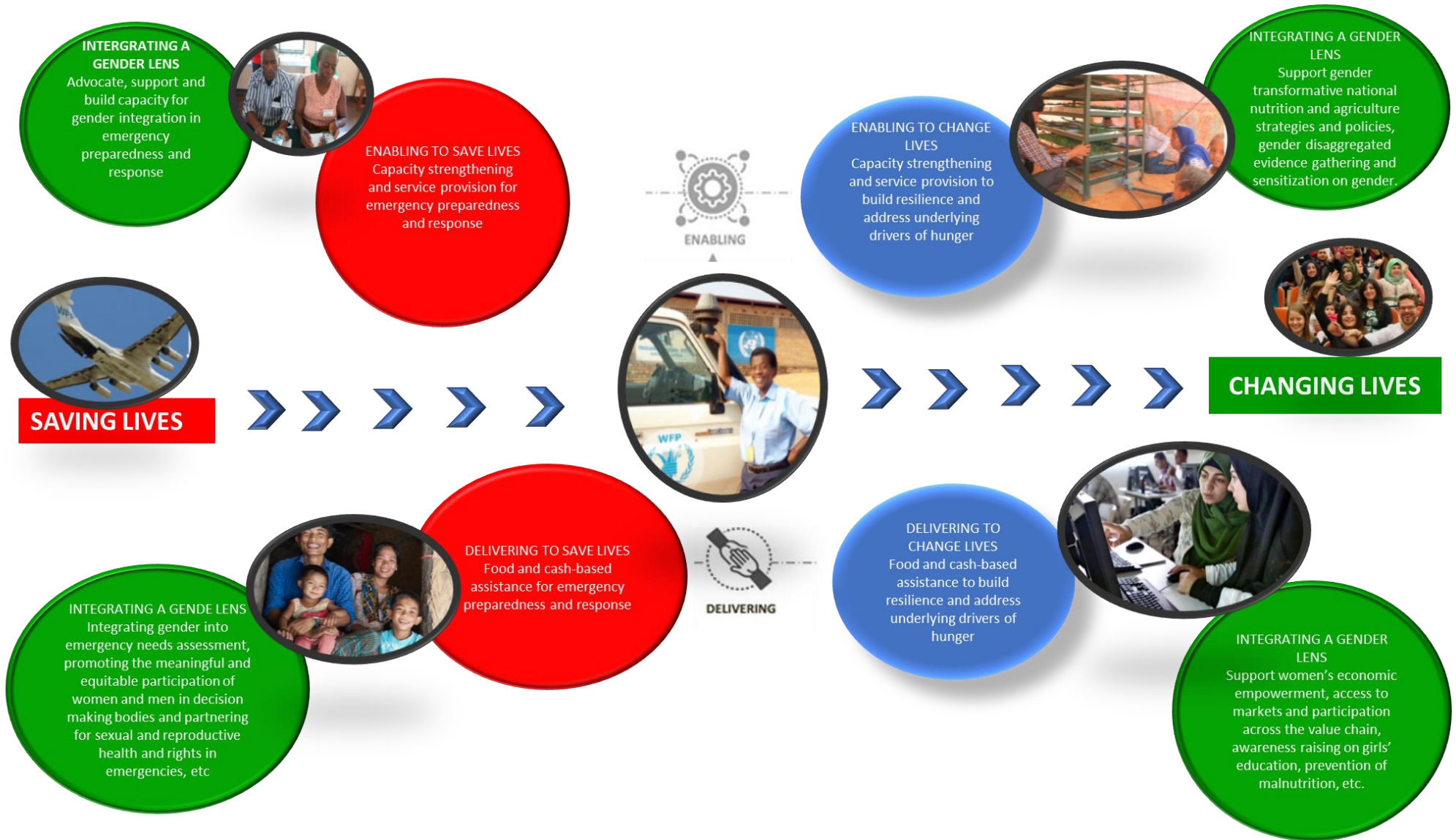




Figure 3: Innovation solutions

## INNOVATION SOLUTIONS: STEPPING INTO THE FUTURE

WFP's EMPACT is helping young refugees and the communities hosting them to build a brighter future and have better livelihoods

EMPACT provides digital skills through a tailored, focused vocational training programme, and partners with leading tech firms to connect trainees with online work opportunities.

Since 2016, WFP's EMPACT programme has trained more than 18,000 students across twelve campuses in Lebanon and Iraq; 65 percent of participants are female.

In Iraq, almost 20 percent of students generated an income through online work and 33 percent of alumni were employed 4 months after graduating.



22. In delivering support that saves lives, WFP recognizes that crises affect people of all genders in diverse ways and that gender-based social norms contribute to those crises and their impacts. For example, WFP consults diverse beneficiaries regarding transfer modalities to ensure that assistance is safe and accessible and matches the needs and circumstances of women and men; offers complementary activities to empower women and foster gender equality, such as saving groups in Bangladesh; conducts awareness-raising sessions on gender equality and access for sexual and reproductive health services ( as in Afghanistan, Ecuador and Nigeria); promotes women's participation and leadership in the delivery of assistance; ensures that gender-responsive complaint and feedback mechanisms and referral systems for cases of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse are designed and established in a participatory manner using local and culturally appropriate frameworks; and promotes opportunities for digital financial inclusion when providing cash transfers. Gender-transformative approaches mean engaging not only women, but also men.

Figure 4: Women's economic empowerment: evidence of what is working

Women's economic empowerment: evidence of what is working

- 1) **Nutrition:** By prioritizing women and girls as the main recipients of nutritious transfers, WFP can safeguard and increase their access to and control over incomes and other resources and involvement in decision-making, contributing to their empowerment
- 2) **School meals:** The breaking barriers to girls' education project and home-grown school feeding connect women farmers as suppliers to schools.
- 3) **Cash-based interventions:** Cash-based transfer programmes empower people to meet their essential needs in local markets and can contribute to long-term objectives such as digital financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment when designed to do so.
- 4) **Climate change and food security:** The Rural Resilience Initiative (R4) is WFP's flagship approach to integrated climate risk management. It improves the situation of women and girls in rural areas by enabling them to strengthen family income and food security through access to disaster risk reduction, financial savings and climate insurance services. R4 promotes gender equality and women's empowerment for equal access to resources and an equal voice in decision making.
- 5) **Food assistance for assets, food assistance for training and empowerment in action programmes:** Food assistance for assets programmes are one of WFP's key initiatives for contributing to improved long-term food security for people and their communities. Food assistance for assets can also contribute to the achievement of SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, involving them in selecting, obtaining access to and managing assets.
- 6) WFP works with millions of **smallholder farmers**, especially women farmers, the backbone of the global agricultural economy. WFP works towards gender equality – helping men and women to enjoy equal rights, opportunities and entitlements. Women's empowerment is also prioritized. Women's ability to influence decision making regarding business and spending is also prioritized.
- 7) **Peacebuilding:** WFP supports the empowerment of rural women for sustainable peace, food security and nutrition, through joint programming with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, under a project funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

23. In delivering programmes that change lives, WFP seeks to apply gender-transformative approaches to enhancing the food security and nutrition of women and men through resilience building interventions, which might include facilitating equal access to and control of resources, opportunities, power and the ability to exercise agency; awareness raising; and confidence building (see example 1 in box 1). Transformative results include women’s financial self-sufficiency, improved social capital and mitigation of the risk of gender-based violence. WFP promotes women’s economic empowerment by offering training in entrepreneurship skills and access to credit in support of sustainable livelihoods, as in Egypt, Guatemala, the Syrian Arab Republic and the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe; by promoting the establishment of associations and cooperatives of women farmers, as in Nicaragua; and by procuring fresh products from women producers and cooperatives for school feeding programmes. Food assistance for assets activities increasingly employ integrated approaches, with women and men equally involved in planning and programmes designed with gender equality and women’s empowerment objectives, as described in a 2017 [study on food assistance for assets](#).<sup>1</sup> Climate change initiatives integrate gender equality actions by promoting equitable access to training, assets, information and market opportunities, as in Egypt and Senegal, and to weather-related disaster risk assurance, such as in Ethiopia and Guatemala. Strengthened partnerships between men and women are encouraged as a way of improving women’s participation in decision making and men’s active engagement in dismantling discriminatory practices, reducing gender inequalities and encouraging healthier and more equitable relationships. In Cameroon, for example, WFP and partners use “husbands’ schools” to empower men through participation in sensitization activities on nutrition. Originally set up to improve the nutrition status of families, the schools have evolved to include discussion of issues related to girls’ education, gender equality and gender-based violence and have become a tool for fostering equality within families and households.

#### Box 1

*Example 1.* In Bangladesh, the enhancing food security and nutrition programme provided cash-based transfers to women in Cox’s Bazaar as part of an integrated approach to poverty reduction – with livelihoods training, awareness-raising, savings groups and engagement with village leaders.

*Example 2.* WFP is supporting the ministries of agriculture of Ecuador, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia in developing strategies for rural women. In Ecuador and Nicaragua, WFP is supporting governments in collecting gender-integrated data for emergency response plans and promoting women’s decision making.

---

<sup>1</sup> WFP. 2017. *The potential of Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) to empower women and improve women’s nutrition: a five country study. Final Report.* <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000023821/download/>.



Figure 5: Engaging men and boys

## Engaging men and boys in changing social norms regarding masculinity and femininity



WFP has developed and is implementing a training of trainers learning initiative. So far, more than 80 employees from 50 country offices around the globe have been trained and are now "cascading" their new knowledge to hundreds of colleagues and partners through awareness raising and training.

The training helps to change mindsets, for example by emphasizing the importance of fathers supporting their daughters' aspirations for equality and education.

Sensitizing and involving men in asset creation, training and income generation activities has led to positive transformations of men's understanding and acceptance of women's ability and right to participate and contribute, with improved outcomes for all.



24. By integrating gender equality into enabling approaches – through policy engagement and reform, investment in public sector capacities and provision of technical support – WFP contributes to the promotion of gender-transformative approaches in national normative frameworks, governance structures, systems and services and in national assessments and studies. Capacity strengthening for key actors in women’s economic empowerment, livelihoods, resilience, climate change and gender-responsive social protection and food systems is critical, including at the local level.

**Box 2:**

**Example 3: Engaging men**

We also see the importance of involving men in activities traditionally seen as “women’s activities” such as in nutrition and SBCC: in Palestine for example, nutrition and gender awareness project outcomes improved and the attendance of women was made a lot easier after men were included in the project.

In Afghanistan, because of working with fathers and mobilizing community’s support for the school feeding activity, there was an increase of 35 percent in girls’ secondary education attendance in 2020 alone.

### **Policy goal and objectives**

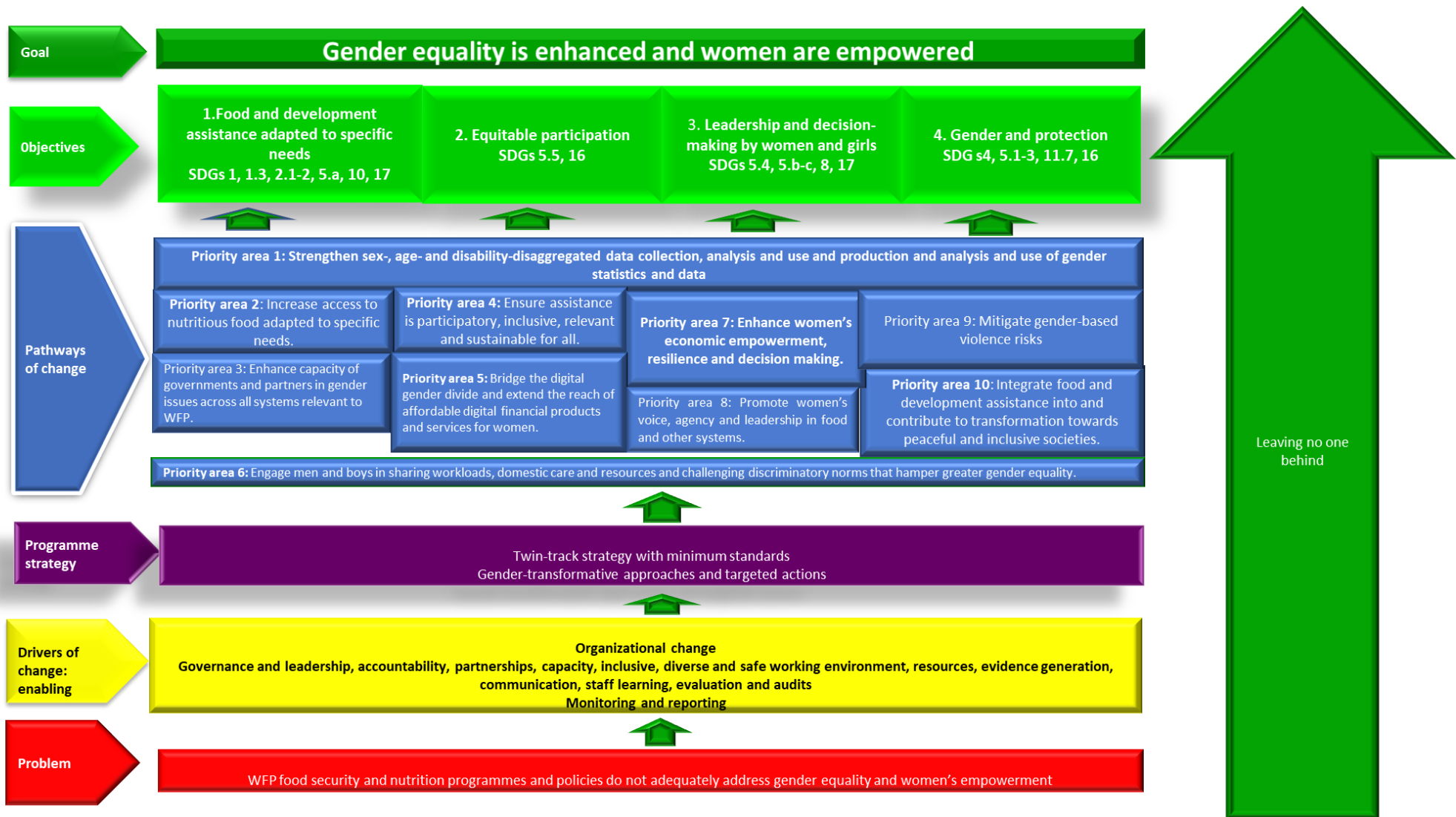
25. The goal and objectives of the WFP gender policy (2022–2026) have been developed in line with WFP’s strategic plan for 2022–2026, which is currently being drafted. The draft - strategic plan has five intermediate outcomes: people are better able to meet their food and essential needs; people have better nutrition, health and education outcomes; people have improved livelihoods and build resilience to shocks and stressors; national programmes and systems are strengthened; and humanitarian and development actors are more efficient and effective. GEWE will be integrated into the plan’s six change pathways and related activities: meeting urgent food, nutrition and essential needs; addressing structural vulnerabilities and building human capital; improving livelihoods and risk management; strengthening national capacity and systems; providing augmented services and advisory solutions; and contributing to global advocacy and partnerships.
26. The strategic plan’s gender outcome – gender equality is enhanced and women are empowered – is the goal of the WFP gender policy (2022–2026), ensuring that the policy is aligned with WFP’s overall organizational goal and vision. Gender equality and women’s empowerment are key contributors to sustainable food security and nutrition (strategic plan goal 1) for people who are more resilient, empowered and better able to meet their essential needs (strategic plan goal 2). The gender policy’s theory of change (figure 6) shows how WFP expects to achieve these gender-transformative outcomes.
27. The theory of change takes into account WFP’s versatility and various ways of responding to the situations and needs of the diverse people it serves. It relies upon WFP’s ability to both save and change lives as both deliverer and enabler. The theory of change reflects the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment to progress on all the SDGs and recognizes WFP’s contributions to them, beyond its dedicated focus on SDGs 2 and 17.

28. The theory of change describes the pathways that WFP should follow in the next five years in order to enhance gender equality and empower women. Priority areas have been identified through a participatory and consultative process that signalled the need for a more targeted and focused approach to equality and women's empowerment. A set of minimum standards (aligned with the performance indicators of UN-SWAP 2.0) are defined for all WFP functions and processes; adherence to those standards is required for sustainable work in each priority area and the achievement of objectives.
29. The theory of change emphasizes the importance of partnerships and advocacy on gender and complementary action with other actors.<sup>1</sup> Partnerships leverage comparative advantages and expertise and contribute to the coherence required to operationalize a triple nexus approach and deliver on WFP's localization commitments.

---

<sup>1</sup> Partners may include United Nations agencies, donors, national and local governmental actors, international and other non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, including women-led organizations and organizations advancing gender equality, academic and research organizations, the private sector, including women-led businesses, the women, girls, men and boys who WFP serves, local and subnational decision making bodies with men and women participants, informal and formal leaders and others.

Figure 6: Theory of change for the WFP gender policy (2022–2026)



### **Objective I: WFP assistance is adapted to specific needs**

- Women, girls, men and boys benefit from WFP assistance adapted to their specific needs and capacities.
30. This objective will have three priority areas: collecting, analysing and using sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data at the individual, household and community levels; contributing to gender, age and disability analyses; and capacity strengthening for national systems, government staff and partners through interventions and advocacy.

### **Objective II: Equitable participation and opportunities**

- Women and men participate equitably in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-transformative food security and nutrition interventions.
31. Work to meet this objective will take place in three priority areas: participatory approaches to the design and delivery of programmes; promoting inclusion in digital systems that facilitate access to information; and promoting equitable participation, equal relationships and more equitable power dynamics.

### **Objective III: Increased decision making by women and girls**

- Women and girls have increased decision making power in their households, communities and societies.
32. *Under this objective there will be a focus on promoting the economic empowerment of women as a way of strengthening their decision making power. Women's economic independence will be supported through, for example, capacity strengthening relevant to sustainable income-generating entrepreneurship, purchases from women's organizations and the provision of funding opportunities.<sup>1</sup> There will also be a focus on creating partnerships that will aim to develop sustainable solutions.*

### **Objective IV: Gender and protection**

- Food and development assistance does no harm to the safety, dignity and integrity of the women, girls, men and boys receiving it and is provided in ways that respect their rights.
33. Work to achieve this objective will focus on mitigating gender-based violence risk through gender analysis and on integrating a strong gender lens into key analytical frameworks as a basis for the design and delivery of joint programming and peacebuilding.

### **Intermediate objective: strong leadership, capacity and accountability**

34. Under this objective consideration will be given to governance and leadership, accountability, partnership, capacity and inclusiveness, diverse and safe working environments. WFP is well positioned to reach the five- objectives of the gender policy and achieve its goal of gender equality and women's empowerment, but important transformations in the way the organization functions are required. The gender policy recognizes the need for dedicated leadership and resources at the corporate level and effective rollout of the policy to all levels of WFP.

---

<sup>1</sup> Digital transformation (priority area 5) also provides important opportunities for the economic empowerment of women and contributes to greater gender equality.

## Twin-track strategy and minimum standards

35. Minimum standards should be in place throughout WFP functions and processes in order to sustain work in each priority area and ensure that objectives are achieved. WFP will continue to invest in the following twin-track strategy:
  - *Gender mainstreaming*: This means systematically integrating a gender-transformative approach into needs assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in respect of food and development assistance policies and programmes.
  - *Targeted actions*: These are special measures responding to a need that is identified through intersectional gender analysis and that cannot be addressed through gender mainstreaming.<sup>2</sup> Where the gap in gender equality makes one group of people clearly more vulnerable than others in terms of access to food or development assistance targeted actions for that group will be necessary.
36. The minimum standards have been developed to assist regional bureaux and country offices in closing gender gaps and to strengthen their roles in identifying good practices and testing new modalities for advancing gender equality. Country offices should continue to use entry points for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment – including targeted activities for women and/or men – even if they are not directly related to the food security and nutrition aspects of a programme.

## Organizational change

37. This section will cover measures for ensuring that WFP's senior-level management and other employees have a clear understanding of their own accountabilities and responsibilities and of the institutional mechanisms for achieving organizational change that leads to gender equality and women's empowerment.
38. The section will show which units are responsible for leading on and delivering the expected actions for the successful implementation of the policy. Actions would be expected from the Office of the Executive Director, the regional bureaux, the country offices, the Human Resources Division, the Communications, Advocacy and Marketing Division, the Partnerships and Advocacy Department, the Ethics Office, the Office of the Inspector General, the Gender Office, the Resource Management Department, the Emergency Operations Division, the Legal Office, the Office of Evaluation and the Supply Chain Operations Division, the Management Service Division, the Workplace Culture Department and the Programme and Policy Development Department.
39. The Human Resources Division will among other things lead action on gender parity and assessing the core values and competencies in gender equality and women's empowerment for all employees. The Gender Office will lead in increasing staff capacity in respect of GEWE and rolling out the gender transformation programme. The Supply Chain Operations Division will lead on identifying opportunities to enhance the integration of gender considerations into supply chain processes and results, including but not limited to the development of targets for the proportion of women suppliers and vendors and specific opportunities for engaging with women subcontractors.

---

<sup>2</sup> Definition adapted from: European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO). 2013. *Gender: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance. Thematic Policy Document 6*. Brussels.  
[https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender\\_thematic\\_policy\\_document\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf).



## **Risks**

40. This section will identify risks involved in implementing the gender policy, for example with regard to the availability of human and financial resources, failure in collecting and analysing data, limited GEWE capacity and related risk mitigation measures.

## **Resourcing requirements**

41. The amount of resources required to implement the WFP gender policy (2022–2026) over five years has yet to be determined. It will be imperative to provide the needed human and financial resources for decentralized delivery in response to the increasing scale of WFP operations and the high level of demand for gender-related support.