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Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for the Dominican Republic (2019–2023)

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for the Dominican Republic for 2019–2023.
2. The evaluation was conducted between April and December 2022 using a theory-based, mixed-methods and gender-sensitive approach.
3. The evaluation was conducted to serve accountability and learning purposes and to inform the preparation of a new CSP.
4. The evaluation made six recommendations and 12 sub-recommendations, six of which are operational and six strategic.
5. The response sets out whether WFP management agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with each evaluation recommendation and sub-recommendation. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for implementing those recommendations.

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**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION
OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (2019–2023)**

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Responsible WFP office or division (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office or division (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Deadline for completion	Status of implementation
<p>Priority: High Deadline: End of 2023 (with publication of the next CSP) 1. WFP's next country strategic plan should more closely reflect the specific political and economic situation of the Dominican Republic as an upper-middle-income country, a Caribbean island State and a country that shares a border with Haiti. WFP should seek stronger alignment with the United Nations planning framework for the Dominican Republic and secure complementarity among the Rome-based agencies. In this alignment, WFP should anticipate a continued trend of declining international support for the Dominican Republic and resources for WFP's work under strategic outcome 1 (partners' capacity to achieve zero hunger) and strategic outcome 2 (improved nutrition status of vulnerable groups) and establish a stronger focus on strategic outcome 3 (emergency preparedness, mitigation and response), considering climate change and natural disaster-related challenges at the national, island and Caribbean regional levels.</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	Partially agreed (see explanation under sub-recommendation 1.3)				

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1.1 In developing a stronger focus on strategic outcome 3, WFP should avoid overlaps and promote closer cooperation on the ground in the implementation of its food security-related actions where its mandate overlaps with those of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.		Agreed	During the design of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) for 2023–2027, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have collaborated as co-leaders of outcome group 3 on climate change, risk management and emergency preparedness, working on the joint formulation of inter-agency strategies.	Country office management (programme unit)	March 2023	Completed
			WFP has worked with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on the implementation of the poor rural families' productive inclusion and resilience project, which defines IFAD's medium-term strategy for the implementation of food security and resilience actions in the Dominican Republic. WFP has signed a memorandum of understanding on the implementation of the project with the Dominican Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, in consultation with IFAD.	Country office management (programme unit)	June 2023	Completed

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<p>1.2 WFP should step up and further diversify its fundraising (including direct fundraising and private sector partnerships) to secure sufficient funding for remaining work under strategic outcomes 1 and 2, while continuing its current fundraising for activities under strategic outcomes 3 and 4 (support for crisis-affected populations). This requires a longer-term pipeline approach and donor diversification to reduce donor earmarking of funds to less than 75 percent, to enable the country office to secure the continuity and coherence of the overall country strategic plan implementation.</p>		<p>Agreed</p>	<p>As part of the design process for the new CSP, the country office has developed a partnerships action plan that defines the diversification strategy that it will follow to ensure sufficient, diversified and flexible funding. The country office will develop tools for operationalizing the partnerships action plan and will identify donors interested in providing short- and long-term support for work under specific strategic objectives, according to the financing interests in the donors' countries, and opportunities for diversifying funding sources, including with private sector and development partners.</p>	<p>Country office partnerships unit (programme unit)</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>Under way</p>
<p>1.3 The next country strategic plan should consider a four year period in order to align with the other United Nations entities in the country as of the start of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for 2028–2032. This harmonization of planning is required to allow WFP and its United Nations partners to jointly strategize for coming planning periods.</p>		<p>Disagreed. As agreed with management at headquarters and the regional bureau, the five-year CSP cycle can still be considered to be aligned with the four-year UNSDCF cycle. The additional year in the</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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		CSP cycle has allowed WFP to leverage the learning derived from the design process for the UNSDCF, and to incorporate into the new CSP the priorities and restrictions set by the Dominican Government and the United Nations system during that process.				
<p>Priority: High Deadline: End of 2023 (with publication of the next CSP) 2. WFP should strengthen the intervention logic and strategy of its next country strategic plan to enable more synergy in the implementation of activities under different strategic outcomes. This requires the development of a comprehensive theory of change for the entire country strategic plan, for which the reconstructed theory of change drawn up for this evaluation and existing theories of change for strategic outcomes 1, 2 and 3 could serve as references.</p>	Country office (regional bureau and headquarters)	Agreed				

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2.1 A particular area in which more synergy across strategic outcomes is required is in strengthening links between social protection activities (under strategic outcomes 1 and 2) and emergency response (under strategic outcomes 3 and 4). This is also a key area where government partners still have considerable demand for capacity strengthening and technical assistance from WFP, particularly at the policy and systems levels.		Agreed	During the implementation of the new CSP, the country office will continue to strengthen coordination between the risk management and social protection systems, working with national technical working groups such as those for shock-responsive social protection and integrated resilience in nutrition during emergencies.	Country office programme unit (partnerships unit)	December 2024	Under way
			The use of financial support to expand social protection programmes in emergency settings is already being piloted within WFP, and the country office will continue to prioritize those efforts under the new CSP. WFP intends to continue strengthening the support it provides in emergency situations by following an approach focused on addressing food insecurity.	Country office programme and partnerships units	December 2023	Under way

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			During the design of the new CSP, the country office held a workshop facilitated by the regional bureau and headquarters and focused on developing a theory of change for WFP's programme of work in the Dominican Republic for 2023–2028 that reflects WFP's interests and the national priorities. In addition, internal multi-stakeholder workshops were held where the nutrition, risk management and climate change, emergency response, monitoring and evaluation and partnerships teams at the country office defined the strategic objectives, transfer modalities and prioritized population groups under the programme of work.	Country office programme unit (monitoring and evaluation unit)	December 2022	Completed
2.2 To enhance and facilitate synergy across the various strategic outcomes, the country office could consider reinstalling a programme management function with an overview of all CSP operations and the task of identifying opportunities for synergetic projects that can cut across strategic outcomes.		Agreed	Management has prioritized the re-establishment of a programme management function in the country office, and the recruitment process for a head of programme is currently under way. Management will ensure that the recruitment process is	Country office management (human resources unit)	June 2024	Under way

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			finalized as soon as possible and the position is filled by the start of the implementation of the new CSP.			
<p>Priority: High Deadline: By end of 2024 (before end of year 1 of next CSP) 3. WFP should develop a strategy for transitioning from its capacity strengthening support for government partners to providing demand-based technical assistance to some of these partners. This is needed given the clear recognition that the organizational capacity of WFP's partners has been strongly enhanced in previous country strategic plan periods. Capacity strengthening could still be considered at the institutional level, when policies and systems present flaws or coordination challenges, such as those identified in the national system for disaster prevention, mitigation and response.</p>	Country office (regional bureau and headquarters country capacity strengthening function)	Agreed				

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3.1 Based on the acknowledgement of strengthened capacity and access to resources of its government partners, the WFP country office may consider further operationalization of its demand-driven service delivery under strategic outcome 5 of the country strategic plan.		Agreed	As part of a long-term transition strategy based on strengthening national capacities through the provision of technical assistance and on-demand services, the country office is reviewing the processes, and setting up the operational arrangements, for strengthening its portfolio of services provided to the Government and humanitarian partners. The country office will maintain those arrangements and is expected to engage with the national institute for integrated care in early childhood and the commodity voucher programme under the national benefit sharing plan. Building on that engagement, WFP will develop a catalogue of the services to be provided and their prices and delivery methods.	Country office supply chain unit (programme unit)	June 2024	Under way

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: Before 2026 4. WFP should develop a specific approach and strategy to strengthen the humanitarian–development nexus in its work. These should be tailored to the context of the Dominican Republic and to specific vulnerabilities arising from emergencies (such as hurricanes and climate-change-related flooding or droughts) and for specific vulnerable groups (such as Haitian migrants and undocumented people). The country office should acknowledge that its experience and organizational capacity is not sufficient to achieve this nexus alone. It will need to develop partnerships with other development-oriented actors in the United Nations system and civil society to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus structurally in all its humanitarian assistance interventions.</p>	<p>Country office (regional bureau and headquarters)</p>	<p>Agreed</p>				

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4.1. The country office, with the support of the regional bureau and headquarters, should engage in dialogue and negotiations with key humanitarian donors and possible new donors to acquire longer-term funding for its emergency responses and humanitarian assistance, in order to build in a transition phase for development interventions that foster socioeconomic empowerment of beneficiaries. This requires humanitarian support funding horizons that extent beyond a minimum of two years.		Agreed	WFP will strengthen its presentation of initiatives that focus on the transition between humanitarian and development interventions, and its engagement with traditional and new donors in dialogues and negotiations.	Country office programme unit (WFP partnerships function)	June 2024	Not started
			WFP will prioritize the identification of current projects and initiatives in emergency responses and humanitarian assistance programmes with a view to defining possible synergies and opportunities for establishing links between humanitarian and development projects as part of a humanitarian–development nexus approach.	Country office programme unit (WFP partnerships function)	December 2024	Not started

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			WFP will continue to advocate multi-year, flexible and sustainable funding to ensure the sustainability of the country office's humanitarian portfolio, in line with the planned outcomes of the Grand Bargain. However, it is important to keep in mind that the majority of humanitarian funding envelopes are still structured to cover short-term (annual) needs.	Country office partnerships unit	December 2024	Under way
4.2. The country office should identify potential partners within the Government, the United Nations and civil society to jointly prepare approaches and interventions aimed at establishing and strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, using complementary competencies, experience, expertise and networks.		Agreed	The country office will continue to expand its roster of government and civil society partners and will work in coordination with other United Nations entities to identify synergies and opportunities for joint interventions focused on specific themes or geographic areas, including at the humanitarian-development nexus.	Country office partnerships unit (programme unit)	December 2024	Under way

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			To strengthen coordination with other United Nations entities, the country office will continue to participate actively in the United Nations inter-agency network of resource mobilization alliances, which aims to coordinate and support the integration, monitoring, organization and implementation of partnerships for resource mobilization.	Partnerships	June 2024	Under way
<p>Priority : Medium Deadline: Before end of 2027 (by publication of next CSP) 5. WFP in the Dominican Republic should continue to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti by mobilizing humanitarian assistance for Haiti (humanitarian corridor and WFP's cross-country work in both countries) and in disaster and emergency-related response on both sides of the border. In doing so, the country office could look for opportunities to increase its relevance at the Caribbean-region level, considering the strategic location of the Dominican Republic and the existing national capacity to mobilize for emergency</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters)	Agreed. Any expansion of the country office's role within the region will require the agreement of headquarters and the regional bureau and the formulation of a clear expansion strategy.				

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response to other island States in the region. This may require stronger regional positioning of WFP in the Dominican Republic at the Caribbean-region level.						
5.1. Based on the recognition that WFP's work on the humanitarian corridor is of strategic importance to both the Dominican Republic and Haiti and possibly to the Caribbean region as a whole, it is recommended that WFP develop its country office in the Dominican Republic into a more pronounced regional hub, which would also facilitate access to alternative funding sources for WFP in the Dominican Republic and the region.		Agreed	The country office will work with headquarters and the regional bureau on assessing the complementarities among the WFP hubs in the region – in Panama, Barbados and, potentially, the Dominican Republic – and defining a clear strategy based on the added value of the operations of the country office in terms of regional logistics and emergency response.	Country office management (supply chain unit, regional bureau supply chain unit)	December 2024	Not started

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5.2. WFP should closely align with United Nations efforts in the Dominican Republic and Haiti to strengthen humanitarian and development interventions on both sides of the border and in a cross-border approach, within specific windows to be identified in agreement with the Government. In this connection, WFP could continue its activities related to the Haitian humanitarian-crisis and its natural disaster and emergency-related response activities, for which it has specific knowledge, experience and expertise.		Agreed	Under the new CSP, the country office will continue its efforts to improve response capacities within the Dominican Republic and its support for other county offices in the region, taking into account the impact of WFP programmes, initiatives and strategic actions on the most vulnerable people and communities, including the Haitian population living in the Dominican Republic and undocumented Dominicans in humanitarian settings.	Country office programme unit (supply chain unit)	June 2025	Under way
			Country office management will continue to have regular conversations with the Haiti country office with a view aimed at aligning the emergency response and development strategies of the two offices.	Country office management	December 2024	Under way

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5.3. The WFP country offices in the Dominican Republic and Barbados and WFP headquarters should engage in a dialogue regarding the extent to which and the specific areas in which WFP in the Dominican Republic could develop a stronger regional profile.		Agreed	The country office will work with headquarters and the regional bureau on evaluating the complementarities among the WFP hubs in the region – Panama, Barbados and, potentially, the Dominican Republic – and defining a clear strategy based on the added value of the operations of the country office in terms of regional logistics and emergency response.	Country office management (supply chain unit)	December 2024	Not started
<p>Priority : High</p> <p>Deadline: By end of 2024 (before end of year 1 of next CSP)</p> <p>6. WFP in the Dominican Republic should increase its focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment, inclusion, and accountability to affected populations/protection in planning, programming and monitoring and evaluation. This will require WFP to consider these aspects at the activity and output levels and to pay more systematic attention to empowerment processes and to achieving differential effects and overall impact for specific target groups. WFP will need to increase its</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed				

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efforts to analyse empowerment and gender and inclusion aspects and ensure they are systematically integrated into its interventions, in order to achieve transformational change in gender equality and women's empowerment and empowerment of specific vulnerable groups including migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, young people and older people.						
6.1. Haitian migrants and refugees should be included more explicitly in planning, implementation and monitoring. More knowledge about specific effects and the overall impact of WFP interventions on these target groups is needed to improve the quality of WFP's own interventions for these groups and provide evidence to support WFP's policy dialogue and advocacy efforts (and its joint efforts with other United Nations entities) to improve the position of the most vulnerable target groups in Dominican society.		Agreed	A gender and protection analysis, expected to be completed by early 2024, will cover all the planned actions under the new CSP. Based on that analysis, the country office will develop a gender and protection work plan and, with support from the monitoring and evaluation and gender and protection teams in the regional bureau, create indicators that facilitate a clearer follow-up on migrants and other vulnerable population groups.	Country office programme unit (monitoring and evaluation unit, regional bureau monitoring and evaluation and gender and protection units)	June 2024	Under way

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			In preparation for the new CSP, the implementation of the accountability to affected populations policy will be reviewed and feedback and complaint mechanisms in the field will be improved, especially through increased access to those mechanisms for Haitians who face social and language barriers.	Country office programme unit	December 2024	Not started
6.2. The place and role of the monitoring and evaluation function and effort in the country office should be strengthened, along with corresponding capacities, and monitoring and evaluation indicators should be improved, particularly at the outcome level. More effort is required to systematize and analyse monitoring and evaluation data for informing future management decisions and improving and introducing innovation into country strategic plan implementation. This will also require more training for all country office staff and more organizational discipline in the population of and use of data in monitoring and evaluation systems. Furthermore, it is recommended that WFP investigate the potential for alignment and synergy with national efforts coordinated by the		Agreed	To strengthen capacities at the country office, the monitoring and evaluation team has been expanded from one to three staff members; the programme team has received training in the country office tool for managing effectively; and the monitoring function has been expanded to ensure monitoring during and after distributions, with reports shared with the units concerned. Management is prioritizing the appointment of a new head of monitoring and evaluation to fill the recently vacated position, and the recruitment process is under way.	Country office programme unit (monitoring and evaluation unit)	June 2024	Under way

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Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development in monitoring the effects of national food security and social protection service programmes, to allow more joint data mining in that regard.						
			The logical framework of the new CSP includes additional outcome indicators, particularly those that reflect capacity strengthening efforts.	Country office programme unit (monitoring and evaluation unit)	June 2023	Completed
			The country office will continue to work with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development on strengthening the ministry's capacities in monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the country office and the regional bureau are analysing WFP's contribution to capacity strengthening in the Government through the piloting of outcome harvesting, which will be completed in late 2023. WFP also supported the Government in the estimation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification for 2022 and is currently supporting the 2023 exercise.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (programme unit, regional bureau monitoring and evaluation unit)	November 2024	Under way

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			The country office will prioritize the provision of support to the Government for the design of a monitoring plan for the national plan for food and nutrition sovereignty and security for 2023–2026.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (programme unit, regional bureau research, assessment and monitoring unit)	November 2024	Not started