



Background note on the Special Address of Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

**Annual session of the Executive Board
Thursday, 27 June 2024, WFP headquarters Auditorium and on Zoom**

For over 60 years, WFP has provided emergency food assistance, often in conflict, post-conflict or disaster situations. To date, WFP continues to assist millions of people displaced, rendered homeless, or deprived of basic resources by cataclysmic events, whether man-made or natural, avoidable or not. Through decades of crises and countless interventions, WFP has developed a unique body of expertise in addressing emergencies. This applies both to programming and to the mechanisms of preparedness and response.

Conflict, economic shocks, climate extremes, and soaring fertilizer prices have combined to create a food crisis of unprecedented proportions. In this scenario, WFP is facing multiple challenges: the number of acutely hungry people continues to increase at a pace that funding is unlikely to match, while the cost of delivering food assistance is at an all-time high.

WFP is committed to staying and delivering on our mandate, but active conflicts, shifting frontlines, political inaction, and bureaucratic impediments continue to stand in the way of accessing food-insecure communities and saving lives. At the same time, the global economic downturn and long-term fiscal tightening translate into many government donors and other partners reducing levels of support.

To adapt to the global reality, WFP is constantly looking for ways to maximize available resources, while boosting the efficiency and effectiveness of its work, so maximize the return for every dollar received.

Martin Griffiths has held the role of Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator since May 2021. He has brought to it a wealth of humanitarian and mediation experience, including serving as the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, the first Executive Director of the European Institute of Peace, and adviser to all three of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoys for Syria. In his long career, he has also spent time at various aid organizations, including both Save the Children and Action Aid, and worked for the United Nations as Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes and as Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator when the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was first set up in 1998.

During his tenure, Mr. Griffiths has been a tireless advocate for the humanitarian community and people affected by crisis everywhere. He has sought to revitalize and update the humanitarian system in the face of growing challenges, and has spearheaded humanitarian diplomacy efforts, including playing a key role in the Black Sea Initiative. He has facilitated strong collaboration between WFP and OCHA in critical crises such as in Gaza, Sudan, Ukraine and Myanmar, to mention only a few.

Mr. Griffiths will share with the Executive Board membership and WFP Executive leadership his reflections on his time as Emergency Relief Coordinator, as well as his perspective on WFP's role in addressing multiple complex crises.