



## **Background note on the special address of Mr Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator**

Annual session of the Executive Board, 2025  
Monday, 23 June 2025, WFP headquarters Auditorium and on Zoom

Today's global humanitarian landscape is more complex and volatile than ever, shaped by a confluence of geopolitical tensions, operational constraints, and deepening funding gaps that continue to impede efforts to save and change lives. Over 300 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian support – a stark reflection of the impact of multidimensional crises driven by rising conflict, extreme weather events and economic instability. Food insecurity continues to rise at alarming levels, signalling a persistent erosion of resilience in vulnerable communities.

Amid rising needs, funding has been dwindling annually, with this year's levels projected to drop to a record low, compromising efforts aimed at reaching the most vulnerable. At the same time, growing geopolitical tensions continue to threaten core humanitarian principles and values, marked by increased fragmentation of multilateralism, politicization and instrumentalization of humanitarian assistance, and the weakening of the political consensus around saving lives.

These structural shifts and fast-evolving dynamics require the humanitarian system to rethink – and reshape – the way it responds to mounting global challenges. In February 2025, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Mr Tom Fletcher, launched the “Humanitarian Reset” as part of the broader, United Nations Secretary-General-led UN80 reform initiative, with an aim of reducing inefficiencies and duplication, improving effectiveness, responsiveness and inclusivity, strengthening local solutions and accountability to affected people, while keeping humanitarian principles at the centre.

In this global context, WFP is refining its strategic focus to prioritize emergency responses and support innovations and partnerships that enhance food security. At the same time, WFP is undertaking bold but difficult efficiency measures, to recalibrate its operational capacity to sharpen programmatic impact in an environment of tightening donor resources.

Mr Tom Fletcher assumed his current role as ERC at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in November 2024. A distinguished diplomat and author, Mr Fletcher previously served as the United Kingdom's Ambassador to Lebanon and held senior advisory roles to three British Prime Ministers. Known for his focus on global education, innovation, and diplomacy, ERC Fletcher brings a deep commitment to multilateralism and humanitarian action to his current role as the United Nations Humanitarian Chief.

In his special address, the ERC will brief the Executive Board on the full scale of today's humanitarian challenges, highlighting how amidst significant transformation, the humanitarian community had set a clear direction to save as many lives as we can with the resources we have. In this context, he will highlight WFP's life-saving role in food security, which contributes to global peace and stability while also emphasizing WFP's increasing focus on community resilience and the essential need for reinforced Member State support – both in resources and the defence of humanitarian principles, access, and safety – to ensure the organization remains strong and enabled to deliver on its mandate.