

برنامج  
الأغذية  
العالمي



Programme  
Alimentaire  
Mondial

World  
Food  
Programme

Programa  
Mundial  
de Alimentos

**Executive Board  
Annual Session**

**Rome, 3–6 June 2014**

## **POLICY ISSUES**

### **Agenda item 5**

*For information\**

# **E**

Distribution: GENERAL  
**WFP/EB.A/2014/5-F**  
9 May 2014  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## **UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTECTION POLICY**

\* In accordance with the Executive Board's decisions on governance, approved at the Annual and Third Regular Sessions, 2000, items for information should not be discussed unless a Board member specifically requests it, well in advance of the meeting, and the Chair accepts the request on the grounds that it is a proper use of the Board's time.

This document is printed in a limited number of copies. Executive Board documents are available on WFP's Website (<http://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document is submitted to the Executive Board for information.**

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Director, OSZ*:	Mr S. Samkange	tel.: 066513-2262
Chief, OSZPH**:	Mr P. Howe	tel.: 066513-3020

Should you have any questions regarding availability of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

\* Policy, Programme and Innovation Division

\*\* Humanitarian Crises and Transitions

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past decade, the humanitarian community has placed increasing emphasis on integrating human rights protection into emergency responses. In line with this development, WFP is enhancing its efforts to support the protection of the people it serves. An important milestone was the Board's approval of the humanitarian protection policy in February 2012.

Since then, 30 WFP country offices have undertaken initiatives to strengthen their protection efforts in contexts that range from large-scale emergencies such as South Sudan and the regional response to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, to protracted crises in Pakistan and Kenya, and recovery and development settings in Ecuador and Nepal. Eleven country offices have identified protection as a special priority, dedicating specific time and resources to ensure progress in this area.

This document updates the Board on the status of implementation of the protection policy. It focuses on achievements and lessons learned across WFP in each of the six elements of the policy: i) staff capacity development; ii) context and protection risk analysis; iii) integration into programme design and implementation; iv) incorporation into programme tools; v) protection information management; and vi) partnerships.

Of these six elements, country offices have primarily focused on developing staff capacity, incorporating protection into programme design and implementation, and adjusting tools to reflect protection concerns. Some have demonstrated achievements in all of these areas.

Emerging issues and lessons include recognizing that integrating protection takes time, management commitment is needed to achieve results, technical expertise is a continued requirement and further funding will be necessary for more systematic policy roll-out and the integration of protection into WFP programmes in the future.

Country offices widely expressed agreement that WFP should contribute to the protection of crisis-affected populations, and that doing so can improve the protection outcomes of the humanitarian response while also contributing to WFP's reduction of hunger.

## INTRODUCTION

1. In line with the humanitarian community, WFP has been enhancing its contribution to protection for close to a decade.<sup>1</sup> In February 2012, the Board approved the humanitarian protection policy which defines WFP's role in supporting the protection of crisis-affected people, recognizing that the most food-insecure and vulnerable populations are often also those most at risk of human rights violations.<sup>2</sup>
2. Since 2012, 30 country offices – more than one third of the total – have begun work to integrate protection into their programming and operations.<sup>3</sup> Eleven of these have identified protection as a special priority, allocating specific time and resources to ensure progress in this area.<sup>4</sup> Protection capacity has been strengthened within six Regional Bureaux, and overall guidance and management has been provided by the Humanitarian Crises and Transitions Unit in Headquarters.<sup>5</sup> This document provides an update on policy implementation by these stakeholders.
3. Information was collected between December 2013 and February 2014 through consultations in Ecuador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, Somalia (in Nairobi) and the Nairobi Regional Bureau; desk reviews and questionnaires on experiences in other countries; and interviews with Headquarters staff. Special attention was given to the 11 country offices that have a particular focus on policy implementation.

## BACKGROUND TO THE HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION POLICY

4. The policy reflects the interlinkages between protection and food security in crisis settings: while hunger causes and exacerbates existing protection risks, people's access to food can also be affected by the protection risks they face. WFP has a responsibility to take into account the protection concerns of the people it assists, and in doing so it can also improve the quality, effectiveness and durability of the impact of its assistance.
5. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) defines humanitarian protection in the following way:

Protection encompasses all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law i.e., human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> WFP launched its protection project in 2005.

<sup>2</sup> WFP/EB.1/2012/5-B/Rev.1.

<sup>3</sup> Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey under the Syrian operation.

<sup>4</sup> Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Somalia.

<sup>5</sup> With protection advisers at the regional bureaux in Bangkok, Dakar, Johannesburg and Nairobi and the Regional Emergency Coordinators Office in Amman; and a protection focal point in Panama.

<sup>6</sup> IASC. 1999. *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, policy paper. New York.

6. As WFP does not have a mandate for protection, it adopts a practical definition centered on assistance: protection means designing and carrying out food assistance activities that do not increase the protection risks faced by crisis-affected populations, but rather contribute to the safety, dignity and integrity of vulnerable people.

## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IMPLEMENTING THE PROTECTION POLICY

7. WFP's protection policy has six elements: i) staff capacity development; ii) context and protection risk analysis; iii) integration into programme design and implementation; iv) incorporation into programme tools; v) protection information management; and vi) partnerships. Achievements in these areas during the reporting period are captured below.<sup>7</sup>

### Staff Capacity Development

8. Awareness-raising and skills-building for staff and partners is central to WFP's protection efforts. During the reporting period, more than 1,500 staff from WFP, cooperating partners and governments in 25 countries were trained in integrating protection into food assistance activities, adding to the 2,500 staff and partners trained previously; 30 focal points were trained in workshops at the regional bureaux in Bangkok, Johannesburg and Panama (OMP). Annual global workshops for protection advisers and focal points provided more in-depth technical training and sharing of experiences.
9. Protection has also been integrated in a number of other corporate trainings. For example, protection and civil-military coordination are included in trainings for logistics staff and reports officers.
10. Widespread training has increased knowledge of protection and awareness of WFP's role and has also enhanced interest and commitment to integrating protection into operations. Other capacity development efforts including annual workshops for protection advisers, technical backstopping and the exchange of good practices and updates from field operations have contributed to the development of a global protection network, helping country offices improve their protection strategies based on lessons from other operations.

### Context and Protection Risk Analysis

11. Integration of protection concerns into WFP programmes depends on having a sound analysis of the context and protection risk environment. Several country offices have reviewed their programmes to identify how they may affect the risks people are exposed to.
12. Protection reviews were carried out for all WFP activities in Nepal and DRC. In other countries, protection risk analyses have been carried out for particular programmes: in major emergencies such as Mali, the Philippines and South Sudan; as part of feasibility studies for cash and voucher pilots in Bangladesh, Burundi and Ethiopia; and for Purchase for Progress activities in Malawi.
13. A methodology for conflict-sensitive programming has been piloted in selected operations, including Afghanistan, and Lebanon and Jordan as part of the regional response to the Syrian crisis.

<sup>7</sup> Specific examples from country offices are included to highlight results. In many cases, other countries have undertaken similar activities, but for purposes of brevity, not all activities are reported here.

## Integration into Programme Design and Implementation

14. Integrating protection into programmes involves: i) ensuring that WFP programmes take into consideration the safety, dignity and respect for the rights of beneficiaries; ii) designing programmes that contribute to overall protection outcomes for the people WFP assists; and iii) implementing strategies to improve accountability to the people receiving assistance.<sup>8</sup>
15. Considerable work has been done to adjust programme activities to ensure that they are safe and dignified and to mitigate any unintended negative consequences of programme implementation. For example, in South Sudan, the distribution of food products that do not require milling meant that people seeking refuge in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan compounds did not have to leave the premises, which reduced their exposure to attack. The Field Security Division helped put in place measures for safe distributions in the volatile environments of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Egypt. In the more development-oriented context of Nepal, conditions in the Himalayan Mountains can be dangerous, and WFP has established a workers' compensation scheme for participants in its food-for-assets (FFA) programmes.
16. Some country offices more strategically support protection outcomes by including protection objectives in their programmes. WFP programmes in Ecuador seek to reduce inter-communal tensions by implementing FFA activities that bring refugees and host communities together. The Bangladesh country office supported women's empowerment through its programme on food security for the ultra-poor. In DRC, WFP used food assistance to facilitate the reintegration of gender-based violence (GBV) survivors into their communities. Addressing violence against women while they collect fuelwood is a protection objective of the Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy initiative in Kenya and Ethiopia.
17. While also an objective in its own right, improving accountability to crisis-affected people is a cornerstone of protecting their rights and provides a means to help ensure that WFP's programmes are safe and dignified. To facilitate affected populations' participation in processes and decisions that relate to them, country offices have increased the use of participatory approaches, such as focus group discussions. This method identified community concerns that helped shape appropriate distribution modalities and targeting criteria in Lebanon and Jordan under the Syrian regional response. In Pakistan, internally displaced persons, WFP and cooperating partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the participation of people receiving assistance.
18. Approximately 20 of the 30 implementing countries have established complaints and feedback mechanisms. Where these are widely used by communities and well managed by WFP – as in Afghanistan, Kenya and Pakistan – they provide an effective avenue for strengthening communities' influence over programmes and help to identify problems in programme implementation, including those that may entail protection risks.

## Incorporation into Programme Tools

19. The incorporation of protection into monitoring tools, programme guidance and assessment methodologies has been carried out at both the corporate and country office levels.

---

<sup>8</sup> WFP has expanded its programme on accountability to affected populations to meet its commitments under the Transformative Agenda.

20. At the corporate level, protection has been included as a cross-cutting issue in WFP's new Strategic Results Framework, with two related indicators: beneficiaries' safety at – and on their way to and from – programmes sites, and information sharing with affected populations. Related guidance for monitoring and evaluation has been adjusted to reflect these protection dimensions.
21. Corporate guidance on protection is being drafted; protection checklists for each WFP programme type have been developed and distributed. The Cash and Voucher Manual has been adjusted to reflect the findings of a 2012 study on the protection and gender dimensions of cash- and voucher-based programming, and the 2013 School Feeding Manual includes a module on protection.
22. Most country offices collect data on the protection risks related to WFP's programmes through their regular monitoring. New innovative approaches are being adopted including a community tension perception score in Ecuador, and a new monitoring and evaluation strategy with strong emphasis on accountability in Somalia. Afghanistan, the Philippines and other countries have started to highlight protection issues in monthly reports.
23. To a lesser extent, protection considerations have been included in assessment tools, such as comprehensive food security and vulnerability analyses and food security monitoring in Burundi, rapid food security assessments in DRC and the Philippines, and joint assessment missions with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Burkina Faso.

## **Protection Information Management**

24. As WFP strengthens its reporting on protection concerns, it will increasingly be handling sensitive information such as the personal data of the people it assists. WFP field staff also often witness protection incidents or are approached for assistance in resolving protection concerns.
25. WFP is enhancing its information management mechanisms to ensure that sensitive data are handled securely, in accordance with clear principles and procedures, to avoid putting beneficiaries at risk. An internal data protection working group is developing guidance.
26. At the country level, WFP and partners are working on practical ways of protecting personal data. In Bangladesh and Kenya, in preparation for the roll-out of biometric verification, WFP and UNHCR have developed a system that protects sensitive data on refugees while ensuring sufficient access for WFP programming.
27. Some country offices are developing standard operating procedures for referral to protection actors by WFP staff who witness, or are approached for help regarding, protection incidents. In Kenya, all WFP staff have referral cards with information on where to direct cases of GBV or child protection concerns; in Malawi, WFP has provided targeted communities with the contact information for a victim support unit; and in Jordan, inter-agency standard operating procedures for GBV cases and child protection have been developed.

## **Partnerships**

28. WFP relies mostly on non-governmental organizations (NGO) and government partners for implementing its food assistance programmes. Several of these partners have long experience in addressing protection concerns, and some have specific mandates for protection and undertake protection programming.

29. In some countries, WFP is working with partners to sensitize them to WFP's protection policy and to establish clear measures for providing food assistance in ways that take into account people's safety, dignity and rights. In Pakistan, WFP has trained selected staff from all its cooperating partners as focal points for protection and beneficiary feedback; government counterparts and cooperating partners in Nepal have also been trained. In countries, such as Kenya and those involved in the Syrian operation, United Nations and NGO partners have co-facilitated training with WFP.
30. Strong partnerships support WFP's engagement in protection, such as in Pakistan, where WFP's Area Office in Peshawar learns from – and often informs dialogue in – the protection cluster. In Nepal, WFP has influenced the national protection agenda through its partnership with the Government. In Nicaragua, WFP and the Government have jointly developed a manual on protection and gender issues in emergencies, following WFP's efforts to sensitize the Government on the role of protection within a rights-based approach to programming.
31. WFP and partner staff can cause protection risks when they violate codes of conduct by, for example, becoming perpetrators of abuse themselves. WFP's commitment to the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) is crucial, and the protection policy recognizes PSEA as essential to the principle of avoiding to do harm. An advisory group led by a WFP Assistant Executive Director is enhancing WFP systems and accountabilities for PSEA. Corporate guidance and training are being developed from the ground up, drawing on the standard operating procedures and best practices developed by the Kenya country office.
32. WFP's long-term participation in the global protection cluster, and its more recent participation in the task forces on protection mainstreaming and protection priorities have been beneficial in providing lessons from other organizations, helping WFP define its own role in protection, and serving as a forum where WFP can share its experience on mainstreaming protection.

## EMERGING ISSUES AND LESSONS

33. Over the first two years of policy implementation, key challenges and opportunities for improvements have been identified.

### Protection Takes Time

34. Integrating protection into the operations of an organization as large as WFP takes time. Efforts to build capacity in protection in most of the countries included in this update predate the adoption of the protection policy, with some starting as early as 2006.
35. Integrating protection is a phased process that usually begins with training and capacity development, continues with protection analysis and integration into tools, and moves on to protection-sensitive programme design and implementation through strengthened partnerships. This is a process that cannot be concluded in a prescribed timeframe, but must be supported over an extended period.

### Management Commitment and Support are Crucial

36. Prioritization by and commitment from management are essential for policy implementation. Headquarters is responsible for influencing policy direction and providing guidance on implementation, while keeping protection on the agenda through continued interaction with, and support to, the field. The need for continued guidance on protection was frequently mentioned during information collection.



37. Managers in country offices have a responsibility to provide opportunities for staff to build their capacity on protection, ensure that staff have the space and time to integrate protection into their work and hold them accountable for doing so.
38. Prioritizing protection among other duties is a challenge, particularly for junior staff who do not have authority to decide on priorities. It was often recommended that protection responsibilities be formalized in Terms of Reference to ensure prioritization.

### **Protection Expertise Is Required**

39. Several country offices and regional bureaux have benefited from the deployment of international protection advisers for periods ranging from three months to two years.<sup>9</sup> Most of these advisers come from stand-by partners: Irish Aid, the Danish Refugee Council, the Norwegian Refugee Council, RedR, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Protection experts have been essential to guide the early stages of integrating protection. They will also be needed over the longer term in complex environments, and at Headquarters and regional bureaux to support country offices already integrating protection and to guide the expansion of policy implementation to additional countries in 2014.
40. Retaining appropriate staff is challenging, particularly when relying on short secondments. Frequent staff turnover results in a loss of expertise, institutional knowledge and momentum for protection integration. This is particularly critical in emergency settings and at Headquarters.

### **Protection Has Costs**

41. Some activities for integrating protection require start-up investments, such as training, while others incur continuing costs, such as complaint and feedback mechanisms. Protection-sensitive programming may result in more expensive operations: impartial monitoring requires the recruitment of third-party monitors; and providing workers' insurance for FFA participants implies additional costs.
42. The services of stand-by partners should also be considered as financial contributions to policy implementation. For example, deployment of the protection advisers used so far would have cost WFP USD 1.6 million.<sup>10</sup>
43. Some initiatives can however be implemented with little financial investment. In OMP, small sums of start-up money have been used across the region to stimulate interest and generate small-scale initiatives, which can be expanded. The protection initiatives of other organizations can also be resources: in Pakistan WFP plans to train police on humanitarian principles and safe distributions as part of an initiative funded by the protection cluster.
44. As initial funds run out, it is essential that country offices include funding for the integration of protection in their programme budgets and that donors continue to allocate such funding.

---

<sup>9</sup> Fifteen protection advisers have been deployed to seven country offices, four regional bureaux and Headquarters. In other cases focal points with relevant background were appointed, with Headquarters and regional bureaux providing additional support.

<sup>10</sup> Based on average rates for equivalent WFP staff for the 92.5 months of stand-by partner deployment over the reporting period.

### **The Timing Must Be Right**

45. As found across the countries reviewed, the protection policy can be applied in all contexts – conflict, natural disaster, recovery, transition, and development – and one of its strengths is its focus on context analysis and adapting tools to each situation.
46. However, it was noted that it is more difficult to integrate protection into established programmes, where there is less opportunity to revise tools and adjust targeting or other processes. Possible entry points for integrating protection in established operations include new initiatives, such as switching from food to cash or voucher distributions, setting up biometric systems, or establishing complaint and feedback mechanisms.

### **Protection Is Best Done in Partnership**

47. Partnerships with protection actors can improve WFP operations, create synergies in areas of programme overlap, and provide a forum for WFP to advocate for protection, such as through clusters. Weak partnerships can limit WFP's ability to effectively engage in protection due to lack of support from specialized agencies. Defining roles can also be challenging, particularly in operations managed by agencies with a protection mandate, such as in complex refugee settings or integrated missions.
48. There is also need for strong partnerships internally in WFP among Headquarters units, including with the Gender Office, as protection and gender issues are often linked in the field.

### **There Are Limits**

49. Broader constraints can limit the extent to which protection can be integrated into programmes. For example, in conflict settings, insecurity can limit WFP's field presence and protective influence, as was noted in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Pakistan, South Sudan and the Syrian response.

---

## **CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD**

50. WFP has made considerable progress in integrating protection into its programmes. Country offices in contexts ranging from large-scale emergencies to development settings have demonstrated notable achievements, particularly in integrating protection into tools, programme design and implementation, and in staff capacity development.
51. Country offices agree that integrating protection into WFP operations is both necessary and beneficial. It is widely believed that WFP can contribute to the protection of crisis-affected populations, and that doing so also improves its food assistance programming.
52. Going forward, WFP will increase the number of country offices integrating protection into their work in diverse contexts, and will deepen the engagement of those that already focus on protection issues.
53. Lessons indicate that while much has been achieved over the past two years, full implementation of WFP's protection policy will require long-term commitment and further investments and is likely to extend beyond the planned completion of policy roll-out in 2016.

---

## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FFA	food assistance for assets
GBV	gender-based violence
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
NGO	non-governmental organization
OMP	Panama Regional Bureau
PSEA	protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees