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Update on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 (repositioning the United Nations development system)

1. This information note builds on the update presented to the Executive Board at its 2019 annual session¹ by providing additional information on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279² on repositioning the United Nations development system (UNDS).

Introduction

2. Since the last update in June 2019, internal adjustments at WFP have been incremental. For example, WFP is working to align existing country strategic plans (CSPs) with the new United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks (UNSDCFs) and is providing input for the underlying common country analyses. Some aspects of the reform are still in the design phase, including the regional review and the multi-country office review, in which WFP senior leadership and all WFP regional bureaux have been involved. WFP continues to co-chair the business innovations group with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and to work with sister agencies, including the other Rome-based agencies, on the various reform components. WFP is strongly committed to the objectives of the reform as a means of achieving better results for people in need and supporting Member States in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

¹ WFP/EB.A/2019/5-G.

² General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/72/279).

Focal points:

Mr A. Abdulla
Deputy Executive Director
tel.: 066513-2401

Ms C. Ushiyama
Director
New York Office
email: coco.ushiyama@wfp.org

Reinvigorated resident coordinator system

3. Since the start of 2019, resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, including WFP country representatives, have been undertaking enhanced coordination and cooperation, particularly as outlined by the provisional country-level management and accountability framework (MAF), which defines their respective roles and responsibilities. A review of how the provisional MAF has been implemented is planned for the last quarter of 2019 or early 2020. Meanwhile, a management and accountability framework for the regional and global levels is expected to be put in place following the completion of the regional review process. Updates for the WFP country representative job description and the WFP performance and competency enhancement system are also under way.
4. WFP's share of the annual contributions that United Nations agencies are making to cover the costs of the resident coordinator system currently amounts to USD 2.9 million (a doubling from previous years). WFP has paid its share for 2019. WFP continues to apply the 1 percent coordination levy in accordance with the system-wide guidance. Contributions to WFP subject to the levy have generated some USD 7,000 thus far.³ WFP expects that by the end of 2019 it will transfer around USD 100,000 generated through the levy to the resident coordinator system. WFP's 2019 transactional and administrative costs associated with the levy are estimated to be USD 30,000 to date.

Changes to United Nations country teams

5. UNSDCFs have a primary role in United Nations reform. The United Nations Development Coordination Office issued final guidance on UNSDCF implementation to United Nations country teams in May 2019, focusing on countries that are due to develop new UNSDCFs in 2019 and 2020. Lessons learned from these pilot countries will inform refinements of the guidance in 2020 and 2021.
6. Entities of the United Nations sustainable development group have developed a series of internal technical "companion pieces" on the following topics: guiding principles, United Nations common country analyses, UNSDCF design, monitoring and evaluation; United Nations country team configuration; funding UNSDCFs and financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and development, humanitarian and peace collaboration. Once finalized, these companion pieces will serve as "how to" guides that are practical, succinct, responsive to country team needs and grounded in country-level practice. An additional companion piece on economic transformation is planned for later in 2019. WFP is part of the design teams that are working to craft these companion pieces.
7. An oral update will be provided during the 2019 second regular session of the Executive Board on how WFP is adapting to the new UNSDCFs and their relation to WFP's CSPs. There are a few points to note, as discussed in the next two paragraphs.
8. WFP has analysed all CSPs and interim CSPs with the aim of aligning them with the forthcoming UNSDCFs, including concrete recommendations on the way forward. These have been discussed with each regional bureau, and WFP is working closely with the countries that are adopting UNSDCFs in 2019 and 2020, advising WFP country offices based on the emerging global guidance and each country's circumstances. Going forward, the lifecycles of all CSPs will be fully aligned with the cycles of the UNSDCFs.

³ The levy is charged only on "tightly earmarked" contributions for "development-related" activities. WFP will therefore apply it only to contributions that donors have earmarked for the root causes focus area. Only contributions from "third-party" donors are subject to the levy, so those from host governments, South-South cooperation and United Nations donors are excluded; contributions from the private sector, including foundations and non-governmental organizations, are subject to the levy.

9. As part of the reform, there is a much stronger focus and emphasis on the common country analyses (CCAs). As “living” documents, the CCAs will be critical avenues for WFP country teams to highlight food security and nutrition issues to be addressed in UNSDCF. All current CCAs worldwide are expected to be updated by the end of 2020 using the new guidance and process.

United Nations business innovations group and WFP efficiencies

10. The Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group is co-chaired by WFP and UNHCR and has established a full-time project team. WFP and its partners in the group are providing the project team with staff and resources to advance this work.
11. One aspect of this team’s work has been the mutual recognition principle. This principle allows a United Nations entity to use or rely on another entity’s policies, procedures, system contracts and related operational mechanisms for the implementation of activities. To date, 16 United Nations entities have signed a high-level statement of mutual recognition. WFP currently is working on a study to understand how to operationalize mutual recognition principles in connection with the services that it plans to offer to other agencies.
12. WFP proactively engaged with a task team, led by the business innovations group, to develop both inter-agency guidelines on a business operations strategy and a new online platform that will facilitate a cost-benefit analysis for a more streamlined approach and provide real-time visibility regarding how United Nations entities are collaborating at the country level, as well as regular monitoring and reporting of progress.
13. WFP is chairing a United Nations task team on common premises, which is developing a strategy together with a business innovations group project team on how best to support the reform target of 50 percent of United Nations offices being housed in common premises by 2021. In this context a new database of United Nations premises is being established. For its part WFP is actively promoting the co-location of its facilities with those of other agencies. Of WFP’s 692 offices around the world, 57 of 174 at the national level (33 percent) are housed in common premises, as are 113 of 518 (22 percent) at the sub-national level.
14. Regarding light vehicles that the United Nations uses to transport staff, WFP is investing in a concept (led by the Business Innovations Group) to transform the current approach into a United Nations global facility that offers transport services to country operations. The proposed concept would ensure the most efficient use of vehicles by combining them into a single pool, professionally and commonly managed, that utilizes existing and new technologies to ensure the safe and effective movement of field staff for the implementation of programmes. WFP is willing to offer its fleet services to support the transformation. It is also working to digitize the vehicle and driver booking process in 15 country offices and is planning to test an inter-agency carpooling initiative for selected operations.
15. WFP is further advancing United Nations development system reform by providing inter-agency services through the online humanitarian booking hub platform that is currently used by seven United Nations entities.⁴ The platform provides a unique opportunity to digitally transform the way the United Nations system works and to streamline operations across agencies to drive efficiency through the consolidation of costly assets such as guesthouses, vehicles and drivers.

⁴ The humanitarian booking platform covers 240 guesthouses; 500 United Nations drivers from WFP, UNHCR, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Population Fund; 46 United Nations clinics; and 285 air travel routes operated by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service.

Changes to the regional approach

16. In July 2019, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted resolution 2019/15, calling for further examination of the regional review and multi-country office review, including intergovernmental consultations. These two reviews have been progressing in earnest since September, and WFP has played an active role supporting both. A United Nations internal review team comprising members of the United Nations sustainable development group, is examining a proposal by the Secretary-General for a regional collaboration platform (RCP) in each region to foster collaboration on sustainable development across the entities of the United Nations development system operating at the regional level. WFP is closely involved in the relevant discussions, which are taking place in Rome and New York and at the regional level.
17. At its first session, in September 2019, the internal review team examined a central question on the value proposition of the United Nations at the regional level, as well as the expected purpose and function of the proposed RCPs. The internal review team is expected to meet again in early November to agree on a potential governance structure for the RCPs and a tailored proposal for each region including knowledge management hubs, enhanced transparency and results-based management, a strengthened data ecosystem and the identification of administrative services that can be provided efficiently through common back offices. The review is planned to continue through the remainder of 2019, with close dialogue with Member States.
18. Like the regional review, the multi-country office review is following a parallel track of internal United Nations discussions, with an inter-agency working group running alongside intergovernmental consultations with Member States led by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. WFP has a presence in three of these multi-country office locations, namely, Barbados, El Salvador and Fiji. The timeline for completing the review is similar to that of the regional review.

Funding the United Nations development system and partnerships

19. The Secretary-General in 2017 proposed a funding compact for funding United Nations development system reform. The final version of the funding compact was presented in May 2019, during the operational activities for development segment of ECOSOC's 2019 session. The compact reflects Member States' commitments to increase core, pooled and thematic funds and support the funding of the resident coordinator system. It also emphasizes the need for the United Nations development system to improve accountability and transparency with regard to spending; to comply with visibility requirements; to plan and implement joint activities, system-wide evaluations and reporting; and to demonstrate efficiency gains and a more harmonized approach to cost recovery. WFP has analysed the funding compact to determine which of its targets and indicators are relevant for agency-specific implementation and reporting. The annex to the present document provides 2018 baseline information, and 2019 updates where available, on relevant funding compact commitments. The commitments were chosen based on an analysis of those relevant for agency-specific reporting and in a manner that is closely harmonized with a similar process undertaken by the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

20. The funding compact includes a Joint SDG Fund, which is already operational. The first round of disbursements from the fund is expected to be completed by the end of 2019. In the first-round call for United Nations country team joint proposals focused on social protection, specifically on “leaving no one behind”, 36 of 114 country teams that submitted concept notes were approved to move forward to develop full proposals. In total, WFP was part of 14 joint proposals advancing to the full project development stage. In late October, the Joint SDG Fund’s operational steering committee approved 18 joint programmes, including seven in which WFP is participating, in Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, State of Palestine, Rwanda, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania. The overall disbursement for the 18 programmes is USD 35 million, of which some USD 4,900,000 was allocated to WFP in varying amounts across the seven programmes. Eighteen more joint proposals from the first round are expected to be approved in November. A second call for proposals – this time on SDG financing – is expected to be made in the fourth quarter of 2019 or early 2020.
21. WFP has been engaged both in the Joint SDG Fund’s operational steering committee and in the technical and coordination support provided to United Nations country teams in the development of the successful proposals in the first round. WFP is also contributing to refining the scope and focus of the forthcoming second round on SDG financing.

Conclusions and next steps

22. In the final months of 2019 WFP will continue to closely follow United Nations development system reform and to actively engage in the process as it approaches its conclusion in the coming months.

ANNEX

MEMBER STATES' RELATED COMMITMENTS			
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline (and 2019 update where available)
Aligning funding to entity requirements			
1. To increase core resources for the United Nations development system	Core share of voluntary funding for development-related activities	Baseline 2017: 19.4% Target 2023: 30%	Core share of resources to WFP as a share of overall revenue: 2018: 6% / 2019: 7% (Data includes all WFP funding, both humanitarian and development).
	Core share of funding for development-related activities (including assessed contributions)	Baseline 2017: 27% Target 2023: 30%	WFP receives no assessed contributions.
2. To double the share of non-core contributions that are provided through development-related pooled and thematic funds	% of non-core resources for development-related activities channelled through inter-agency pooled funds	Baseline 2017: 5% Target 2023: 10%	Share of WFP non-core resources channelled through inter-agency pooled funds: 2018: 3.5% / 2019: 3.7% (Data includes all WFP funding, both humanitarian and development).
	% of non-core resources for development-related activities channelled through single agency thematic funds	Baseline 2017: 3% Target 2023: 6%	WFP has no thematic funding instruments.
Providing stability			
3. To broaden the sources of funding support to the United Nations development system	Number of United Nations sustainable development group (UNSDG) entities reporting an annual increase in the number of contributors of voluntary core resources	Baseline 2017: 66% Target 2023: 100%	Number of government partners contributing core resources: 2018: 36% / 2019: 32%
	Number of Member State contributors to development-related inter-agency pooled funds and single agency thematic funds	Baseline 2017: 59 and 27% Target 2023: 100 and 50%	WFP does not administer any pooled funds and has no thematic funding instruments.

MEMBER STATES' RELATED COMMITMENTS			
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline (and 2019 update where available)
4. To provide predictable funding for the specific requirements of UNSDG entities as articulated in their strategic plans and for United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF) funding needs at the country level	Fraction of United Nations development system entities indicating that at least 50% of their contributions are part of multi-year commitments	Baseline 2017: 12/25 or 48% Target 2023: 100%	Percentage of WFP revenue that is multi-year: 2018: 14% / 2019 year to date: 18% Percentage of WFP revenue that has a duration longer than one year: 2018: 76.8% / 2019: 65.6%
Facilitating coherence and efficiency			
7. To fully comply with cost recovery rates as approved by governing bodies	Average number of cost recovery support fee waivers granted per United Nations development system entity per year	Baseline 2017: to be confirmed Target 2019 onwards: 0%	Number of indirect support cost waivers granted by WFP in 2018: 28 for a total value of USD 1.03 million.

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES			
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline (and 2019 update where available)
Accelerating results on the ground			
1. Enhance cooperation for results at the country level	Percentage of resident coordinators that state that at least 75% of country programme documents are aligned with the UNDAFs in their countries	Baseline 2017: to be determined Target 2021: 100%	As of 31 December 2018, WFP's CSPs are aligned with the UNDAFs in 45% of countries. 2019 estimated: 57% of countries. (Alignment reporting is based on timing, not programmatic content).
2. To increase collaboration on joint and independent system-wide evaluation products to improve United Nations support on the ground	% of UNSDG evaluation offices engaging in joint or independent system-wide evaluations	Baseline 2018: 29% (joint evaluation), 20% (independent system-wide evaluations) Target 2021: 75% (joint evaluation), 50% (independent system-wide evaluations)	In 2018, WFP completed five joint evaluations and another five were ongoing. WFP is also engaged in one inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of the response to El Niño in Ethiopia.

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES			
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline (and 2019 update where available)
Improving transparency and accountability			
6. To strengthen the clarity of entity-specific strategic plans and integrated results and resource frameworks and their annual reporting on results against expenditures	% of UNSDG entities that in their governing bodies held structured dialogues in the past year on how to finance the development results agreed in the new strategic plan cycle	Baseline 2017: 62% Target 2021: 100%	WFP strategic plans and corporate results frameworks are approved by WFP's Executive Board. The discussions on these documents, among others, include dialogues with the Board on financing WFP's development results.
	Centralized, consolidated and user-friendly online platform with disaggregated data on funding flows at entity and system-wide level in place (Yes/No)	Baseline 2018: n/a Target 2020: Yes	The CSP data portal provides WFP's Member States access to transparent programme, financial and performance-related information on Executive Board approved CSPs.
7. To strengthen entity and system-wide transparency and reporting, linking resources to SDG results	% of UNDS entities individually submitting financial data to the Chief Executives Board for Coordination	Baseline 2017: 69% Target 2021: 100%	Yes
	% of UNDS entities publishing data in accordance with the highest international transparency standards	Baseline 2017: 36% Target 2021: 100%	Yes
	% of UNDS entities with ongoing activities at the country level that report expenditures disaggregated by country for the Chief Executives Board for Coordination baseline	Baseline 2017: 46% Target 2021: 100%	Yes
	% of UNDS entities that report on expenditures disaggregated by SDG	Baseline 2017: 20% Target 2021: 100%	Yes
9. To increase accessibility of corporate evaluations and internal audit reports in accordance with the disclosure provisions and policies set by governing bodies at the time of report issuance	% of UNDS entities that have made their corporate evaluations available on the United Nations Evaluation Group website in accordance with their disclosure provisions and policies	Baseline 2018: 21% Target 2021: 100%	100% of WFP centralized and decentralized evaluation reports are published on WFP websites. In addition, those that meet or exceed quality requirements are uploaded on to the United Nations Evaluation Group and Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action websites, ensuring wide dissemination of evaluation results to both humanitarian and development communities at the global level.

UNSDG-RELATED COMMITMENTS – UNSDG ENTITIES			
Relevant commitment	Entity-specific indicators	Funding compact baselines and targets	WFP 2018 baseline (and 2019 update where available)
	% of inter-agency pooled funds posting evaluation reports on the United Nations Evaluation Group website	Baseline 2018: 0% Target 2019: 100%	WFP does not administer any pooled funds.
10. To increase the visibility of results for contributors of voluntary core resources, pooled and thematic funds and for programme country contributions	Specific mention of voluntary core, pooled and thematic fund contributors and programme country contributions in United Nations country team annual results reporting and entity-specific country and global reporting	Baseline 2018: n/a Target 2020: Yes	These contributions are highlighted in WFP's annual performance report, in each annual country report and in an annual corporate report on flexible contributions.
	Specific mention of individual contributors in all results reporting by pooled fund and thematic fund administrators and UNSDG recipients	Baseline 2018: n/a Target 2020: Yes	WFP does not administer any pooled funds or thematic funds.
Increasing efficiencies			
11. To implement the Secretary-General's goals on operational consolidation for efficiency gains	% of UNSDG entities that report to their governing bodies on efficiency gains	Baseline 2017: 41% Target 2021: 100%	WFP has consistently reported on a series of efficiency gain measures in its annual performance report since 2015.
	% of UNSDG entities that have signed the high-level statement of mutual recognition	Baseline 2018: 28% Target 2021: 100%	WFP has signed the high-level statement of mutual recognition.
12. To fully implement and report on approved cost-recovery policies and rates	% of UNSDG entities that report annually on the implementation of their approved cost recovery policies and rates to their governing bodies	Baseline 2017: 51% Target 2021: 100%	WFP reports annually on the implementation of its approved cost recovery policies and rates to the Executive Board through the management plan.

Note: where available, 2019 data is as of 13/10/2019.

Acronyms used in the document

CSP	country strategic plan
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
RCP	Regional collaboration platform
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDAF	United Nations development assistance framework
UNDS	United Nation development system
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework
UNSDG	United Nations sustainable development group