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Summary of the work of the 2019 second regular session of the Executive Board

For approval

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Draft summary of the work of the 2019 second regular session of the Executive Board

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Current and future strategic issues

2019/EB.2/1 Opening remarks by the Executive Director

1. Prior to making his opening remarks the Executive Director read out a message from His Holiness Pope Francis, following which the Board President read out a statement from Dr Ahmad Al-Tayyib, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. In his message, Pope Francis drew attention to the “paradox of abundance” and the underlying waste and selfish exploitation of resources, saying that there was a need to establish a new culture based on peace, stability and understanding in which waste was eliminated and people’s right to adequate healthy food was realized. The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar said that the world faced a crisis of food insecurity caused not by a shortage of food but rather by its inequitable distribution and waste, noting that in a cruel irony poor smallholder farmers and fisherfolk produced 60 percent of the world’s food while often being unable to meet their own most basic needs. Thanking the meeting participants for their efforts on behalf of humankind, he called on all to keep before them the faces of the needy, to work together to establish an international convention guaranteeing the right to food and medicine and to work to eliminate waste.
2. In his remarks, the Executive Director said that WFP had an overriding duty to achieve zero hunger and that to implement its dual mandate it was adapting to new challenges. This included a zero-tolerance approach to sexual and other forms of harassment and abuse and efforts to improve the workplace culture at WFP, which was reflected in greatly increased response rates to WFP’s global staff surveys (conducted by WFP every three years since 2012) as employees found the confidence to speak out. Updated personnel policies had made it easier for employees to report incidents, including by abolishing reporting time limits. WFP aimed to be the model for the United Nations in establishing a truly safe and respectful workplace for its 18,000 staff and consultants, enhancing accountability and achieving gender parity.
3. Although global wealth had increased by USD 9 trillion, hunger was nonetheless increasing, currently afflicting 821 million people. A major cause of this anomaly was conflict: zero hunger could only be achieved when conflict was eliminated. At the same time climate change was resulting in more emergencies, even as WFP was making good progress in several long-term crises and preventing famine. WFP had to anticipate developments such as climate-related displacement, providing immediate responses and promoting resilience and self-sufficiency. The basic requirement was to address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition and thereby save lives and use resources more efficiently. Over the past five years WFP had rehabilitated 1.4 million hectares of land, developed over 70,000 km of roads and helped to construct 44,000 irrigation ponds, wells and reservoirs and thousands of miles of canals. Since its founding WFP had also planted 6 billion trees. The important thing was to get such work done promptly, for which an integrated, coordinated and cohesive approach was needed. The role of the Board in this effort was to hold WFP accountable for implementing its plans and its strategic approach to disaster prevention and resilience. Examples of this were the Sahel and Yemen, where WFP had identified impending disasters and was developing coordinated preventive actions with its partners to maintain social cohesion and forestall conflict. Without food security, no other security was possible.
4. More resources would be essential, in particular flexible, multilateral unearmarked funds to give WFP the agility required to address problems of increasing complexity promptly and effectively. In Yemen, for example, extremism and criminality had to be addressed, and WFP had to ensure that the highest United Nations and humanitarian principles were maintained. Efficiency would be greatly enhanced once digital and biometric tools were introduced and the currency stabilized.
5. WFP could work only with the funding it received. In 2019, it had dealt with 18 L3 and L2 emergencies, and while the Executive Director was immensely grateful for all

contributions received, even more funding was needed. It was clear that WFP must upgrade its operating models and focus more on prevention; to that end private sector engagement and funding were urgently required, and WFP was seeking support from major global corporations in areas such as cybersecurity.

6. Board members were unanimous in expressing appreciation for the dedication and courage of WFP staff working in some of the world's most challenging environments and for the energetic leadership of the Executive Director. The generosity of donors was also acknowledged.
7. Board members fully endorsed the work of management to update the WFP policy on sexual and other forms of harassment, abuse of power and discrimination with a view to ensuring that WFP was a safe, respectful, professional and productive workplace and that all staff could be confident of receiving an unbiased hearing in cases of harassment. Board members looked forward to the development of an action plan for implementing WFP's updated personnel policies and creating a culture of respect and tolerance, particularly in view of the increasing number of WFP employees, most of whom had limited contracts.
8. Members also supported the move to enhance digitization, especially with regard to the application of biometric systems in identifying and meeting the particular needs of various beneficiary groups.
9. Board members endorsed the Executive Director's ambition to engage more fully with private sector partners with a view to benefiting from their expertise in areas such as information technology and generating flexible funding. Board members asked for clarification regarding the approaches to be adopted to foster such engagement.
10. Several Board members said that there was a need for even greater coordination and harmonization among humanitarian agencies to ensure that assistance focusing on food and nutrition as well as development was delivered efficiently and economically. The proposed United Nations food systems summit was warmly endorsed. Members welcomed the efforts of the RBAs in the preparations for the summit and emphasized the need for Member States to be fully involved in the preparatory process from the beginning. Board members said that the summit would help WFP to enhance the effectiveness of the large number of L2 and L3 responses by optimizing information gathering, advocating humanitarian principles, maximizing coordination among humanitarian actors and exploiting comparative advantages. It would also support the formation of partnerships to provide common services and maximize the percentage of contributions actually reaching beneficiaries.
11. Board members said that WFP should prioritize its work to address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition. Such action would save scarce resources in the long term by making WFP's beneficiaries more self-sufficient and resilient and enabling them to break the cycle of dependence altogether. They also stressed the need to overcome political difficulties that interfered with humanitarian access.
12. In response, the Executive Director thanked the Board members for their support, noting that the use of biometric tools was well under way and that partnerships had already been established with global corporations in the private sector to maximize revenue and take advantage of their expertise. He assured the Board that the work to optimize the WFP workplace and eliminate abuse in all its forms was under way and that the Board would be kept informed at all stages. The Board was also assured that WFP's risk management policies and mechanisms had been considerably enhanced in recent years and that there had been much progress in closing outstanding audit recommendations in 2019. The Executive Director was also enthusiastic about the food systems summit, especially as it could contribute to better management of the balance between emergency and development needs.

National statements

13. Following the Executive Director's remarks and Board members' comments thereon, a number of Board members made further statements on the matters for discussion at the current session.
14. Board members reiterated that there was an urgent need for more unearmarked, flexible multi-year funding to ensure that WFP had the agility to respond to the diverse challenges it faced. They also emphasized that by addressing the root causes of hunger and malnutrition and combining emergency and development programmes WFP would be making optimum use of its resources. WFP's zero tolerance policy on all forms of harassment was warmly endorsed.
15. Board members observed that the number of food- and nutrition-related crises seemed to be increasing and urged WFP to prioritize its work on sustainable development, saying that the proposed food systems summit would support such multilateral approaches. There was a particular need to optimize the capabilities of national governments and systems with a view to handing over WFP's programmes so that countries could become self-sufficient; WFP's local food procurement mechanisms should be maximized in support of this goal. Board members said that WFP needed clear delegations of authority to pursue its aims without micromanagement and agreed that flexible funding and effective partnerships were essential to achieving zero hunger.
16. Members of the Board urged WFP to optimize its cybersecurity mechanisms in view of the increasing use of digitized systems and to coordinate its systems with partners.
17. A major need identified by Board members was the reduction of conflict, which was one of the most pervasive causes of hunger, malnutrition and lack of development. The essential requirement was political will, and United Nations agencies, programmes and funds should do what they could to stimulate it while adhering strictly to humanitarian principles so that development and emergency programmes could continue without impediment.
18. The Executive Director warmly thanked the Board for its observations and continued support.

Policy issues

2019/EB.2/2 Private-sector partnerships and fundraising strategy (2020–2025)

19. The Assistant Executive Director, Partnerships and Advocacy Department, and the Director ad interim, Private Partnerships and Fundraising Division, gave a brief overview of the three pillars of the strategy: income, innovation and impact. They thanked the Board for its valuable inputs during the development of the strategy, noting that it clearly defined the different roles that private sector entities could play in efforts to achieve zero hunger. Two recent modifications of the document had strengthened the emphasis on beneficiaries and added an additional risk to the risk management section.
20. Board members welcomed the strategy, praising its guiding principles, its focus on sustainable outcomes and the clear separation of partnership and commercial arrangements. Several members said there was a need to diversify WFP's donor base and considered the strategy to be appropriate in targeting businesses for technical partnerships and individuals for flexible funding. It was suggested that partnership engagement strategies be made a mandatory part of every country strategic plan (CSP); that the strategy be piloted before being rolled out to all countries; and that the integration of innovation into all three pillars be improved. One member called for examples of activities and for guidance on how country offices could bridge financial and non-financial partnerships.

21. Many members underscored the importance of undertaking due diligence and safeguarding WFP from reputational risk during implementation of the strategy. Some called for closer coordination with other United Nations agencies, including through joint funding initiatives; compliance with United Nations Secretary-General guidelines on private sector engagement; and a review of WFP's communications strategy in order to strengthen brand management.
22. Stressing the need for full transparency and accountability and acknowledging that factsheets on the companies with which WFP was engaged had been added to the restricted Membership area of the WFP Executive Board website, Board members requested access to partnership agreements and regular updates on implementation of the strategy and the selection of markets targeted for individual giving campaigns. To facilitate the evaluation of progress, management was asked to include the strategy in the annual performance report and to conduct assessments of the activities' impacts on beneficiaries.
23. Members sought clarification on the number of key performance indicators (KPIs) for each funding phase, on what was described as a low benchmark for the return on investment indicator and on the mechanisms that WFP would use for consulting governments in countries targeted for branding and marketing campaigns.
24. During the discussion, the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland made the following statement. His delegation subsequently requested that the statement in its entirety be included in the summary of the work of the session:

"The United Kingdom recognizes the lengthy and detailed consultation process that has accompanied this document and we recognize that other members of the Board are now ready to approve this policy. We are not for four reasons, which I will now set out.

We do not intend to block Board approval, but we will not join the consensus in approving it. Before I get into our four reasons, I want to briefly say I support a couple of the other interventions that have already been made about when this Policy is adopted, the need for transparency as you go along and in particular the need for WFP to pay particular attention to the security of donor data in the individual giving section.

Let me turn now to our four reasons for not being able to join consensus on this policy.

Firstly, we are not comfortable with the idea of spending tens of millions of dollars of funds intended for humanitarian aid on essentially a brand awareness and advertising campaign. We just do not feel that that is appropriate.

Secondly, we question the necessity of doing so. The donors to WFP have been very generous in recent years, based on WFP's performance and the excellent fundraising activity that is already going on. We do not believe that it is, therefore, necessary to be going to seek individual donations at this time.

Thirdly, we believe that there is a high risk attached to the individual giving strategy. There is a high risk that the fundraising strategy targeting taxpayers will increase the impact and probability of negative media coverage targeting either WFP or the donor governments if and when anything adverse were to happen. We realize that WFP does plan to mitigate this risk by seeking approval of the advertising strategies in each country. Nevertheless, this remains outside our risk appetite.

Fourthly, and final, point I would make is, based on the return on investment in the document, for the individual donors in the early years of this Programme this is actually a poor value donation. A very large part of the money they will be giving will be spent on the fundraising campaign itself and on the advertising. We just do not think that we want our taxpayers targeted by such a campaign. So, it is with

these four reservations that we regret we are not able to join consensus on this strategy.”

25. Management assured the Board that it would receive quarterly feedback reports on progress. The Assistant Executive Director, Partnerships and Advocacy, said that management was acutely aware of the importance of engaging with governments in donor countries and of sharing information with the Board. The Legal Office was providing guidance on the latter, but the restricted membership area of the WFP Executive Board website already gave members access to factsheets on the companies with which WFP was engaged. She noted, however, that a degree of confidentiality was required during certain stages of negotiations with private-sector entities.
26. The Assistant Executive Director expressed regret that the strategy did not satisfy the risk appetite of the United Kingdom despite the inclusion of an additional risk component and mitigating measures.
27. Management explained that one KPI did not apply to the first phase of investment because it required data covering 12 months, which would not be available by the end of that phase. That KPI was included for other funding phases because sufficient time to allow for its use would have elapsed by then. The lower level of return applied solely to the first year of investment; returns were forecast to grow over each subsequent year, as shown in the annex to the strategy document. The use of a loan to fund part of strategy implementation also explained the lower returns seen in early years of implementation.
28. Management also noted that resources would be expanded gradually and that experience gained in 2020 would inform future activities in other regional bureaux. It would not be possible to produce impact assessments during the early stages of implementation because it would take time to accumulate the relevant data, particularly for country-level partnerships; reporting on inputs and outputs could be done more rapidly and would be included in regular reports.
29. The Executive Director provided additional details about the prospects for plans and for WFP’s fundraising from the private sector.

2019/EB.2/3 Revised Charter of the Office of the Inspector General

30. The Inspector General presented the revised charter for her office, which strengthened the inspection and investigation functions in WFP. A previous draft had been discussed by the Board in April 2019 before its consideration by the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in November. The revised charter also incorporated two recommendations made by the Joint Inspection Unit: that the charter be approved by the Executive Board in accordance with international best practice; and that any allegations of misconduct on the part of the Executive Director be passed on to the Director-General of FAO and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who would assess them for possible investigation.
31. Board members welcomed the new charter and the improvements that it made. They applauded management’s engagement of the Executive Board and the Audit Committee in revising the charter and providing feedback on earlier drafts. The Office of the Inspector General had a critical role in enhancing systems, strengthening accountability and fostering an ethical, safe working environment throughout WFP. Members emphasized the importance of providing the office with sufficient financial and human resources for its work.
32. Referring to the ongoing reform of the United Nations development system, Board members said that there was a need for further analysis of the possible benefits of harmonizing the internal control mechanisms of United Nations agencies. They also

recommended that WFP consider increasing the term of the Inspector General's mandate from the current four years to the five or six recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit.

33. Thanking the Board members for their comments, the Inspector General said that her current term of four years could be renewed once for an additional four years. The term could be revised in future revisions of the charter, subject to the approval of the Executive Director and the Executive Board in consultation with the Audit Committee.

2019/EB.2/4 Local and regional food procurement policy

34. Management introduced the local and regional food procurement policy, under which WFP aimed to strengthen local value chains, improve the incomes and livelihoods of smallholder farmers and contribute to improved food security.
35. Board members welcomed the policy as having the potential to promote increased local production, stimulate local economies and provide WFP beneficiaries with diverse and nutritious local foods. It was important to ensure that small-scale producers and distributors received fair prices, and many members expressed support for WFP's paying of higher than import parity prices in certain cases. However, it was also important to avoid creating dependency on WFP as a buyer, and the extent to which import parity prices could be exceeded should be reviewed periodically. Members welcomed the collaboration with FAO on home-grown school feeding, the case study from Uganda, the costings included in the document and WFP's attention to the environmental impact of its procurement decisions.
36. Members encouraged management to establish long-term relationships with local suppliers; engage with other agencies and actors, including private sector companies, to benefit from their expertise; and establish strong monitoring and evaluation systems. Members requested regular updates on implementation of the policy, saying that they should include more detailed information on the impacts of WFP's procurement on local economies and the well-being and livelihoods of local communities. They looked forward to an implementation plan for the policy, which should include greater detail on the costs of implementation and the envisaged locations and methods for WFP's food procurement.
37. While the use of fortified food was valuable in emergency and fragile settings, Board members emphasized that it should be viewed as a temporary solution until people obtained access to sufficiently diverse and nutritious unfortified foods. Members also flagged the challenge of ensuring adequate food quality and safety when procuring from many small-scale suppliers.
38. Taking note of the points raised, management said that WFP viewed fortified foods not as a temporary solution but rather a partial solution that helped to increase the micronutrients available to local people as part of a healthy diet that included other nutritious foods. WFP's direct purchases from smallholder farmers were all carried out through farmer organizations and, at USD 30 million, accounted for about 2 percent of total food procured in 2018 – a lower percentage than in 2015. Management planned to use WFP's existing contract modalities for food procurement in ways that enhanced indirect purchases from smallholders through local traders and aggregators (currently at USD 1 billion) in order to strengthen local value chains.
39. The Executive Director added that in recent years WFP had been receiving more contributions in cash than in-kind, which facilitated local and regional procurement.

2019/EB.2/5 Update on the Integrated Road Map

40. WFP management introduced the update on the Integrated Road Map (IRM), which set out findings and lessons learned from the review of interim delegations of authority and governance arrangements. The paper presented proposals related to streamlining the consultation process, delegations of authority, the Member State review process for

crisis-response-related revisions, the CSP data portal and amendments to facilitate multi-country strategic plans.

41. Management noted its willingness to accept the FAO Finance Committee's advice regarding reintroducing the USD 150 million threshold for Member State review of crisis-response-related revisions; reviewing governance arrangements in five years' time; and removing the word "permanent" in respect of delegations of authority to reflect the potential for future changes. Revised proposals would be discussed at the 18 December informal consultation and the finalized proposals would be presented to the Executive Board for approval at its 2020 first regular session.
42. Board members congratulated WFP for the reforms emerging from the IRM, praising enhanced transparency, simplification of the budget structure and management's efforts to consult the Board on IRM implementation. Members welcomed the streamlined consultation process for draft CSPs, although some proposed a review of the mechanism once WFP had more experience with United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks (UNSDCFs). Other members called for greater interaction between country offices and local government technical personnel during CSP and interim CSP (ICSP) development.
43. Many members expressed appreciation for the proposed email notification system and the CSP data portal; several requested clarification on the level of detail of data on the portal and the frequency with which data was updated. One member recommended that WFP introduce an indicator for measuring the timeliness of information provided through the portal.
44. Board members provided their views on the proposed delegations of authority: some considered them to strike an appropriate balance between accountability and operational flexibility; others said that they would place an unnecessary burden on WFP management and the Board and urged members to revert to the proposal presented at the September 2019 informal consultation. Other members urged WFP to provide an analysis of the full two-year interim period before amending the general rules and financial regulations. Members said that once adopted the delegations of authority and governance arrangements should be reviewed to ensure that the Board's fundamental approval and oversight role was maintained.
45. Some members requested that the USD 150 million threshold be reintroduced for the proposed Member State review of crisis-response-related revisions, in addition to the threshold of 15 percent of the current overall budget, to ensure that crisis-response-related revisions of large-budget CSPs were reviewed.
46. Some members said that the interaction between the management plan and the corporate results framework could be improved. They said that the high number of indicators at the country office level could challenge WFP's ability to clearly communicate corporate results and outcomes in the annual performance report, which could affect donors' ability to provide flexible funding.
47. Management said that the document to be prepared for the informal consultation to follow the current session would reflect the following adjustments: the deletion of "permanent" in reference to delegations of authority; a full two-year analysis of the interim delegations of authority; the reintroduction of the USD 150 million threshold for Member State review of crisis-response-related revisions; a commitment to review delegations of authority in five years; and additional detail regarding the CSP data portal, which provided information on the nature and frequency of the data provided. Management looked forward to reaching consensus on the revised proposals in the months leading up to the Board's 2020 first regular session.

2019/EB.2/6 Update on collaboration among the Rome-based agencies

48. Acknowledging the presence of colleagues from FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), management introduced the update. Innovations in the document included a section on Rome-based agency (RBA) collaboration on corporate services and annexes on United Nations development system reform, joint RBA resilience activities and case studies of RBA collaboration in five countries.
49. Joint country strategies for three pilot countries were being developed. A draft joint plan for Colombia identified the geographical areas where the RBAs collaborated, defined five thematic areas with potential for greater collaboration (peacebuilding, crisis response, resilience, food security and nutrition and climate change) and outlined a joint work plan for each area. WFP was leading the revision of a draft plan for the Niger and considering the feasibility of holding an in-country validation workshop by the end of 2019, involving the RBAs, development partners and government agencies. A first draft of a plan for Indonesia was expected by the beginning of 2020. The joint plans took into account the new UNSDCFs being prepared, and many other WFP country directors had expressed interest in joining the pilot.
50. Following the presentation of a draft RBA action plan for the Sahel at the joint informal meeting of the RBA governing bodies in September 2019, the document was being revised, and an update on progress was to be presented at the joint FAO/WFP briefing on emergencies in January 2020; IFAD would be invited to join the discussion. A video on a joint RBA project for smallholders in Madagascar was shown as an example of collaboration at the country level.
51. The Board's discussion started with a cross-List statement on behalf of all the Lists. Highlighting the potential for common services to increase efficiency and effectiveness and strengthen oversight in the RBAs, the statement called on management of the RBAs to provide a first assessment regarding the feasibility of integrating administrative functions and greater collaboration in some oversight functions, encompassing an analysis of the potential added value of a common specialized expertise for the three RBAs, specifically in relation to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Findings from the assessment would provide the basis for discussions with the RBA governing bodies. The Lists had drafted a decision related to their cross-List statement.
52. Board members congratulated management for the inclusive preparation process for the 2019 informal joint meeting of the RBA governing bodies held at WFP headquarters. Welcoming the progress reported and the additional features included in the 2019 update on collaboration, members urged the RBAs to strengthen future reporting through enhanced monitoring of the results of their collaboration, including lessons learned and savings achieved, and by providing greater detail on their experience with collaboration on environmental management systems and joint country strategies. When assessing the feasibility of increasing collaboration, it would be important to take into account the specific mandate and structure of each agency in harmonizing the three agencies' administrative systems. The main objective of all collaboration should be to increase the benefits of RBA activities for beneficiaries and other stakeholders.
53. Observing that collaboration among the RBAs should be part of wider collaboration with other United Nations agencies, members welcomed the growing visibility of the RBAs within the United Nations system, including through their participation in the High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation held in March 2019. The summit on food systems proposed by the Secretary-General for 2021 would provide another opportunity to showcase the RBAs' successes, and Board members intended to play an active role in the preparations for that summit. Members were also pleased with the support that the RBAs provided to the Committee on World Food Security and urged WFP to increase its

engagement with the committee and to take the Committee's guidelines and recommendations into account in the design and implementation of WFP policies and strategies, which would contribute to accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

54. Members applauded the agencies' efforts in joint data collection and analysis and the development of joint country strategies. Both were expected to yield synergies through the pooling of the massive quantities of data held by each agency and the combination of the agencies' comparative advantages. Members recommended that the RBAs supplement the current draft of the Sahel plan of action with additional details on objectives, planned initiatives, allocation of responsibilities and timing.
55. Members proposed other areas with potential for collaboration, including reinforcement of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, reduction of food waste and loss, and promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Generation Equality Forum to be held in Mexico and Paris in 2020 provided an opportunity for the RBAs to strengthen collaboration in that area and thus to contribute to the achievement of SDG 5.
56. One member proposed that the draft decision be revised to reflect comments made at the November 2019 joint meeting of the FAO Finance and Programme Committees, as memorialized in the report of that meeting, on joint strategies, strengthened partnerships and achievements at the country-level and greater focus on strategic issues and lessons learned in future RBA collaboration reports. Other members agreed, and new wording was suggested, discussed and amended during a resumption of the agenda item the following morning.
57. Management took note of Board members' recommendations and comments. Given the very diverse natures of the RBAs, it was essential also to seek collaboration opportunities within the wider United Nations system. New technologies offered opportunities for facilitating the establishment and operation of global shared service centres.

Update on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 (repositioning the United Nations development system) and oral update on the guidance on the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework and common country analysis

58. The Board considered items 4f and 4g together.
59. Reaffirming WFP's commitment to United Nations development system reform, the Director of the United Nations System and Multilateral Engagement Division gave an overview of progress and what was still remaining. The new UNSDCF guidance was being rolled out, including in Colombia, Iraq and Sierra Leone. The companion pieces on UNSDCFs, including on the common country analysis (CCA), were still being drafted. The management accountability framework had been rolled out at the country level. The regional and global management accountability framework would be finalized in early 2020, informed by a regional review.
60. Regarding the funding compact, WFP was collecting the 1 percent levy on donor contributions and expected to transfer up to USD 100,000 for coordination purposes. However, the levy was generating much less funding than originally expected and the collection process had incurred high transaction costs. Overall, the main remaining foundational aspect of the reform was the regional (and multi-country office) review.
61. The Deputy Executive Director emphasized the importance of Board engagement in addressing remaining challenges, including with regard to the regional review. A lack of inter-agency consistency in the definitions of regions was complicating discussions among United Nations entities. WFP management advocated a flexible approach that focused on

structures, frameworks, policies and guidance that would help countries to have the best possible programmes rather than specify the content of those programmes.

62. Moving to item 4g, the Director of Programme and Policy Development reported that United Nations development system reform was increasing the focus on the CCA, which was being broadened to encompass all United Nations work in each country. Guidance provided that the CCA would be a living document and as such would support national development planning. The CCA would tackle questions such as who was being left behind and why. Working closely with the other RBAs, UNICEF and other partners, WFP planned to contribute to the transformation of CCAs by using the experience and analytical expertise it had gained from its work on zero hunger strategic reviews. Preparation of the next iteration of the zero hunger reviews would be incorporated into the CCA process by the end of 2020, which was a challenging deadline.
63. A tentative programme of work had been drawn up for the preparation of second-generation CSPs (internally tagged as "2G"). From June 2020 the Board would receive draft CSPs together with their respective UNSDCFs. The Director remarked that while United Nations development system reform represented a second wave of significant organizational change the IRM had positioned WFP well to make the necessary adjustments at all levels of the organization.
64. Members welcomed the updates and commended WFP for its proactive engagement in the reform process. They expressed satisfaction that UNSDCFs were already in place for some countries and looked forward to receiving information on their implementation. Members called for a review of implementation of the management accountability framework in early 2020 and urged WFP to ensure that reforms did not adversely affect the organization's work or governance mechanisms.
65. Some members said that the 1 percent levy should not be increased and urged WFP to participate in the negotiations on revision of the cost-sharing formula, requesting full and timely information on any revisions made, particularly those with budget implications for Member States. Some members called for a harmonized reporting framework for the funding compact; others requested an overview of and timetable for Board decisions related to the compact, recommending that the compact be a regular agenda item at each annual session of the Board.
66. There was praise for the business innovations group and efforts to drive greater efficiencies. Some members requested details on forecast cost savings and asked whether the target for the co-location of premises was achievable. Others expressed interest in a facility to reduce transport services in countries, requesting more information on the timeline for implementation and saying that they expected gains in terms of expenditure, efficiency and security standards.
67. Board members reiterated support for the cross-cutting priorities of human rights, gender equality, environment and climate change. Some asked to be kept abreast of developments affecting the common chapter, the cost sharing formula and the regional review.
68. Management confirmed that the levy and cost-sharing formula would be reviewed in 2020. Good progress had been made on the business operations strategy, with new guidance sent to all countries. A new tool had recently been launched as part of the strategy implementation and included cost-benefit analysis and the identification of potential country-level collaboration in business areas.
69. Thirty-three percent of WFP offices were currently in common premises, but management did not consider the 50 percent by 2021 target to be achievable, noting a lack of the substantial upfront investment that would be needed to move to shared facilities. In addition, analysis had shown that common back offices would be viable only for larger

country operations and for a subset of the services set out in the Secretary-General's report. The biggest potential source of savings appeared to be global shared service centres. A common fleet of United Nations system vehicles could generate tens of millions of dollars of savings through better use of the vehicles worldwide.

70. In response to a suggestion on the possibility of an annual discussion and review of the follow-up to the funding compact, the Deputy Executive Director remarked that ongoing inter-agency discussions with Member States (such as those planned to take place in New York on 9 December 2019) was the appropriate forum. WFP would continue to report using the agreed standard reporting format and would also reflect on progress in its annual performance report.

Other business

2019/EB.2/7 Oral update on preparations for the 2021 United Nations Summit on Food Systems

71. The President recalled that the agenda item had been requested by the Executive Board Bureau and noted that, although it was for information, a draft decision based on text included in the report adopted at the joint meeting of the FAO Programme Committee and the FAO Finance Committee had been circulated to Board members the previous week and had been agreed to by all Lists on 15 November.
72. The Deputy Executive Director recalled that on World Food Day 2019 (16 October) the Secretary-General had announced his intention to convene a United Nations-wide summit on food systems in 2021. The Secretary-General had not yet issued a formal announcement of the summit, but the Deputy Secretary-General had discussed it with the principals and members of the RBA governing bodies at their joint informal meeting in September and more recently had sent a letter to the RBA principals asking them for their views on timing, location and governance arrangements and for proposed candidates for the role of coordinator and special envoy for the summit. The RBAs welcomed the summit as an opportunity to highlight their potential role in bridging the humanitarian-development divide through the provision of food assistance, resilience building activities and support for smallholder farmers.
73. Two options for the location of the summit had emerged: Bari, before or after the Group of 20 summit to be hosted by Italy, which could include camp-like accommodations at the WFP-run United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot in nearby Brindisi; or New York during the General Assembly, which would be attended by over one hundred Heads of State. Whichever city was selected, the RBAs had recommended that a high-level preparatory event be held in another city, preferably Rome, at least six months prior to the summit with the aim of engaging food systems actors and building momentum for the summit. The RBA principals had put forward four candidates for the role of special envoy.
74. Discussion of the update started with a cross-List statement expressing the Board's view that the strong involvement of the RBA governing bodies in the preparations for the summit, including in defining deliverables, was essential. To that end, they proposed engaging in direct dialogue with the special envoy of the Secretary-General at an informal consultation to be held in December 2019 or early 2020; dedicating the 2020 joint informal meeting of the RBA governing bodies to preparations for the summit; and including the summit as a standing item on the agendas of the Board's sessions.
75. Board members emphasized the timeliness of the summit, which would be held less than ten years before the target date for achievement of the SDGs and at a time when the impacts of climate change called increasingly for urgent action. With current food systems both contributing to and being affected by those impacts, the topic of the proposed summit was also very relevant, particularly given the potential for resilient and sustainable food systems

to contribute to development, attainment of the SDGs and sustainable and healthy diets. Members urged the RBAs to engage with Member States and other stakeholders to raise global awareness of that potential.

76. It was also essential that all relevant actors – United Nations agencies, governments, the private sector, academia and international and civil society organizations – be involved in implementing the bold commitments that members expected to emerge from the summit. Those commitments should include commitments to the development of integrated food systems that delivered on cross-cutting priorities such as gender equality and women's empowerment, environmental protection and climate change action, social protection and the rights of indigenous people and ensuring that no one was left behind, including persons with disabilities. Commitments from the summit should also build on processes and commitments developed during previous summits, including the United Nations Climate Action Summit held earlier in the year.
77. The Deputy Executive Director agreed with the points raised and welcomed the idea of holding an informal consultation in the coming weeks that would prepare the RBAs to move rapidly once the summit was formally announced.

Oral update on the field visit of the WFP Executive Board

78. As delegation leader for the visit, the President began the oral report on the field visit to Bangladesh by members of the WFP Executive Board, which had taken place from 18 to 25 October 2019. Board members from Brazil, Germany, Poland and Switzerland and observers from Australia and Indonesia had taken part. All participants thanked the Government of Bangladesh and the leadership and staff of the WFP country office and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific for their hospitality and the Board Secretariat for arranging the visit.
79. Following a video on the visit, participants shared some of their experiences. Bangladesh hosted 1.2 million displaced Rohingya people from Myanmar; WFP was providing assistance for 840,000 Rohingya people living in camps near Cox's Bazar and livelihood and other support for 200,000 vulnerable people in host communities.
80. Half of the displaced people supported by WFP received food assistance in the form of electronic vouchers for exchange at selected local shops; WFP aimed to offer the vouchers to all camp residents by the end of 2020. Projects on safe access to fuel and energy and reforestation activities implemented with partners, including FAO, were reducing deforestation, and WFP's livelihoods programme was helping 20,000 poor households, particularly their women members, to establish individual and group businesses. The issuing of electronic vouchers in the name of the senior woman in each beneficiary household increased women's role in decision making on household food consumption. Other activities included nutrition education, infrastructure construction and horticulture training.
81. Based on their meetings and discussions with representatives from the Government, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donors, participants confirmed that the WFP country office had established strong cooperation with its partners in Bangladesh.
82. Participants commended the Government for the 50 percent reduction in national poverty rates since 2000 and applauded its generosity in hosting large numbers of displaced people. Development challenges remained, however, while large-scale returns of Rohingya people to Myanmar continued to be unlikely. Participants recommended that WFP and its partners focus on improving infrastructure and living conditions in and around the camps near Cox's Bazar, facilitating employment and livelihoods for women and men, particularly young

adults, and helping to create mutually beneficial links between the Rohingya and host populations.

Administrative and managerial matters

2019/EB.2/8 Report of the joint Board/management working group on harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination

83. The co-chairs of the joint Board/management working group on harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination outlined the work of the group since the 2019 annual session of the Board, which had included frequent meetings of the full group and its two sub-working-groups, advice from two independent experts and consideration of an external review of WFP's workplace culture prepared by the vendor Willis Towers Watson, all of which had fed into a progress report by the working group for the Board's consideration at the current session. The co-chairs reported that management and Member States shared a commitment to preventing and addressing abusive conduct within the organization and to ensuring support for those affected. To that end there was a need for a living plan of action that would evolve to meet changing needs and focus on six areas: reaffirming WFP's values, including through a review of its code of conduct; improving leadership by setting a clear "tone from the top" regarding the responsibilities of managers to ensure a safe and respectful workplace and by factoring such leadership into the selection and management of managers; engaging all employees in the effort to achieve change; improving WFP's people systems, including by increasing transparency in how reassignment, promotions and other systems were operated and by reducing the sense of vulnerability experienced by short-term staff; ensuring swift action against proven perpetrators of abuse and the protection of those affected; and improving communications, accountability and transparency in respect of the work to ensure zero tolerance of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination (HSHAPD) and a safe workplace. Because the working group had not had time to consider sexual exploitation and abuse in respect of beneficiaries adequately and also felt it necessary to deepen its reflections on some elements of sexual harassment, the co-chairs requested that the Board extend its mandate to the 2020 first regular session of the Board to allow it to do so. The leadership of the Executive Director and the efforts of the working group members and all those involved in working to address HSHAPD at WFP were warmly commended.
84. Board members expressed support for WFP's policy of zero tolerance of HSHAPD and applauded management's commitment and efforts to achieve a safe and respectful workplace, including its close consultations with Member States. Board members endorsed the recommendations of the joint working group report, which was hailed as a model for other United Nations entities, and urged WFP to develop the proposed action plan to address the concerns noted in the report in time for consideration at the 2020 first regular session of the Board. The proposal to extend the working group's mandate until the first regular session in 2020 was endorsed. Board members emphasized the importance of clear policies, monitoring and auditing, continual training and awareness raising, accurate reporting and decisive action to promote transparency and make employees confident that they would be heard and protected and that their grievances would be addressed. It was also suggested that the plan of action be part of a broader strategy for having healthy employees and a positive workplace culture and eliminating the circumstances that fostered HSHAPD. Managers had to lead by example to prevent inappropriate behaviour, and their performance in that regard should be assessed against relevant performance indicators. The proposed action plan, to be implemented as soon as possible, would go a long way to helping WFP to employ and retain the motivated and dedicated staff it needed; the knowledge that WFP would support victims and address their concerns promptly and fairly would reinforce confidence. Board members said that the Board must support management without micromanaging and that a balance must be struck between

transparency and a degree of confidentiality that would allow WFP to engage in a thorough self-examination; it was also emphasized, however, that management must be proactive in keeping the Board apprised of developments, that decisive and demonstrable progress was expected, for which the Board would hold management accountable, and that management must be prompt in making the Board aware of instances of abusive conduct. Board members expressed support for a proposed USD 5 million critical corporate initiative on workplace culture and ethical climate building on the work of the joint working group. Concern was expressed by one member that the closed session on HSHAPD that would follow the current discussion, which had been called for by Member States, could be seen as non-transparent. Another member, who had spoken at the start of the discussion on behalf of a List, said that the additional closed session had been requested by Member States because of the need to balance the imperative of transparency with the need for confidentiality.

85. Responding to the comments, the co-chairs acknowledged that more work remained to be done, particularly on developing specific and measurable actions to address harassment. Management was committed to doing so and was already moving quickly to incorporate ongoing actions into the action plan; for instance, the Human Resources Division would be involved in all six focus areas and was currently addressing recruitment, retention, training and contractual arrangements for short-term staff. The Executive Director planned to establish a dedicated team to take forward the process of developing and overseeing implementation of the action plan, and the Board would be kept fully informed.
86. The Executive Director said that, as the joint working group report showed, there was still much to be done to eliminate HSHAPD. It would require hard work, and improved policies alone would not suffice, but he was determined that he and his senior staff would succeed. He asked the Board to keep pressure on management and to hold it accountable, and he pledged that with the Board's engagement WFP would lead the United Nations in developing a healthy workplace culture free of HSHAPD.
87. In closing the discussion, the President led the participants in a standing ovation to pay tribute to WFP staff, whom he said were engaged in a noble humanitarian effort; he wanted staff to know that management and the Board were united in their support for them and were determined to ensure that they could work in an atmosphere that was free from harassment and abuse of all kinds.

Resource, financial and budgetary matters

2019/EB.2/9 WFP Management Plan (2020–2022)

88. Management presented the Management Plan (2020–2022), which the FAO Finance Committee had recommended for approval and to which the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had raised no objections. The assumed funding level of USD 7.4 billion for 2019 was likely to rise to USD 8 billion. Operational needs for 2020 were estimated at USD 10.6 billion and details on operational requirements would be published online during December. The plan included five critical corporate initiatives – two from 2019 and three new ones; a proposed increase in the Immediate Response Account replenishment from USD 20 million to USD 22.5 million; and two new KPIs relating to environmental systems and partnership.
89. Members expressed appreciation for the consultative process through which the plan had been drafted. They expressed approval of the proposed budget by appropriation line, as well as agreement with the proposed distribution of the budget by pillar and the plans for allocating 62 percent of the increase in the programme support and administrative budget to country offices and regional bureaux, including for the recruitment of local staff. WFP's focus on emergency response called for adequate resources, guidance and capacities in

country offices, and members welcomed the plans for increasing accountability, coordination and capacity in the field. Observing that a large share of the budget was allocated to work in conflict-affected countries, one member emphasized the importance of also directing attention to needs in other countries, such as those in the Sahel. The inclusion of evaluation costs in the budgets of CSPs was appropriate, but ensuring that those costs were funded would be challenging. Members observed that joint initiatives with other United Nations agencies were a good way of increasing efficiency.

90. The funding gap of 29 percent (USD 3.1 billion) in 2020 called for continuing efforts to enhance the funding base, increase the efficiency of programmes and encourage traditional and new donors to provide more flexible and predictable funding. Members commended the Executive Director's initiatives to those ends, WFP's expanding partnerships with international financial institutions and the private sector and the increasing number of national Governments providing contributions for programmes in their own countries. One member recommended that WFP base future programmes of work on more realistic expectations regarding funding.
91. Members requested management to increase investments in resilience building and addressing the root causes of hunger; to continue to monitor the results of expenditures to implement the private sector partnerships and fundraising strategy; and to include more details on expenditures from the programme support and administrative account in future management plans. One member noted that WFP had the lowest indirect support cost rate of any United Nations agency. Another said that the funding gap represented a failure to address food security on the part of the international community.
92. Members requested more clarity on the relationships between resource use and results and between programme targets and baselines. Greater use of technology and automated processes would enhance reporting.
93. In reply, management said that it would seek the Board's feedback on proposals regarding the flexibility of WFP's indirect support cost rates in the light of developments at other United Nations agencies. Adoption of the CSP framework and the use of annual country reports were expected to bring greater clarity to the relationship between resource use and results, as was the planned inclusion of expanded programme output targets in the next strategic plan and future management plans.

Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia portfolio

94. The Regional Director for the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia observed that there was little good news to report from the region, where several countries had experienced worsening conditions. Since the Board's 2019 annual session there had been a major shift in the Syrian Arab Republic, ongoing crises in Lebanon, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran and continuing challenges in Yemen, the Sudan, the State of Palestine and Libya.
95. Since November 2019 the number of beneficiaries in the region's 17 country operations had increased from 22 million to 31 million.
96. The Regional Director noted that since the beginning of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic 11.7 million people had been displaced, and 80 percent were currently living below the poverty line. New military operations in the northeast and ongoing volatility in the northwest border regions had collectively displaced nearly 800,000 people in recent months – a serious challenge with winter coming. An additional concern was that 500,000 children were threatened by malnourishment. WFP was working with partners and host governments to prepare assistance for anticipated refugee returns, although the number of returnees was as yet very limited.

97. In the Sudan inflation was a significant problem, and 8.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance, many of them experiencing crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity. WFP was consulting on how it could increase support, including through social safety net programmes.
98. In Yemen, WFP's largest single operation worldwide, WFP was assisting 12 million people and making progress, including through cash-based transfers for 450,000 people, despite limited access and other challenges.
99. A major funding shortfall continued in the State of Palestine, where WFP was able to reach only half of the 700,000 non-refugees in need of food assistance.
100. In Libya WFP was working with the World Bank to assess social safety nets and the potential for government capacity building, collecting and analysing data about migration and providing air, logistics and telecommunications services to the humanitarian and donor communities. WFP had also opened a hub in Benghazi to allow United Nations agencies to operate in the east.
101. In addition to these emergency operations, as well as refugee and other assistance programmes in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, WFP was also seeking to change lives throughout the region – including in Algeria, Armenia, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Tajikistan and Tunisia – through activities such as social protection programmes, school feeding, livelihoods projects, hydroponic farming and fish farming. The region accounted for 65 percent of WFP's cash-based transfer programmes, benefitting 7 million people with USD 1.1 billion in transfers – helping to strengthen local markets and capacities and encouraging local smallholder farming and locally produced food.
102. The Regional Director thanked donors for contributions totalling USD 4.3 billion in 2019, which had been sufficient to cover 75 percent of regional needs. Forecasts for 2020 indicated that USD 4.9 billion in funding would be needed.
103. In conclusion he noted that regional crises were having global effects and that the many challenges posed by economic hardship, climate change and conflict required political solutions.

2019/EB.2/10 Revision of Lebanon country strategic plan and corresponding budget increase

104. Describing the current socioeconomic challenges facing Lebanon, the Country Director set out the three proposed changes to the CSP: to extend it to 2021 in line with the United Nations strategic framework (UNSF) for Lebanon; to support an increase in the coverage of the national poverty targeting programme as requested by the Government; and to add a new strategic outcome to tackle the root causes of food insecurity through increased technical support for the Ministry of Social Affairs.
105. Board members commended the Government for hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees and praised WFP's efforts to foster social cohesion through activities for host communities as well as refugees. Members welcomed the increased focus on capacity building, which would facilitate national ownership of activities in the future; the alignment of the CSP with the UNSF; and the CSP's risk management provisions. Some members suggested that the CSP could better reflect WFP's partnerships in Lebanon, which were vital to the successful implementation of the plan.

2019/EB.2/11 Country strategic plan – Iraq (2020–2024)

106. The CSP for Iraq was presented by the Country Director, who set out the three components of the plan: crisis response; resilience and livelihoods; and capacity strengthening, including with regard to the public distribution system. He emphasized the flexibility of the CSP, which WFP would adapt to changing needs through contingency planning and budget revisions as

necessary. Partnerships would be key to the implementation of the plan, including collaboration with the World Bank, the other RBAs, non-governmental organizations, civil society groups and the Government of Iraq. The CSP sought to be gender transformative, contributing to efforts to keep girls in education and involve women in household decision making.

107. Board members praised the inclusive process used to develop the CSP, which struck an appropriate balance between crisis response and resilience building for individuals and institutions. Members acknowledged the alignment of the CSP with the UNSDCF and national development plans and praised its contribution to many SDGs.
108. In the light of current socioeconomic challenges, members commended WFP for its continued focus on assisting crisis-affected populations, including Syrian refugees and the large numbers of displaced Iraqis. One member underscored the importance of protecting all vulnerable groups, such as single-parent families, individuals with disabilities and children and adolescents who had lost their family structures.
109. Members praised the exit strategy, noting that modernization of the public distribution system would facilitate the future handover of operations. They also noted that the school feeding programme was already fully funded by the Government. They welcomed the establishment of a technical working group to create a unified social protection registry and the use of innovative programmes to build digital and computer skills that opened up international job opportunities for beneficiaries.

2019/EB.2/12 Country strategic plan – Jordan (2020–2022)

110. The Country Director for Jordan opened her presentation with a short video illustrating WFP's work in that country, where human development indicators and resilience to shocks had improved but challenges related to climate change, gender inequality and the economy persisted. The Government remained committed to providing a secure environment for refugees.
111. The CSP followed an integrated approach in which WFP provided support for refugees while responding to the needs of Jordanians. The main focus was on crisis response because refugees were not expected to seek to return to their home countries within the near future. During the period of the CSP, WFP would shift from direct implementation to supporting and strengthening government and community-based efforts to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and promote social cohesion within communities. The current stability of Jordan was beneficial to the entire region. Board members welcomed WFP's shift to more strategic partnerships in Jordan and the CSP's activities for building resilience, social protection and livelihoods. These would help to enhance the dignity of refugees – including 10,000 non-Syrian refugees – and strengthen social cohesion, and they complemented the Government's efforts to provide employment opportunities, including in the private sector. With young people accounting for 74 percent of the population, it was appropriate for the CSP to focus on their needs as well as those of women. Jordan's well-developed markets also made it appropriate that cash-based transfers account for 98 percent of WFP food assistance.
112. Board members welcomed WFP's partnerships with other United Nations agencies, including those working in resilience building and the promotion of gender equality. They applauded the country office's adoption of innovations including hydroponics, iris-scanning and blockchain technologies and encouraged WFP to continue to develop innovations and to support those of other entities.
113. The Country Director thanked the Board for its support.

2019/EB.2/13 Interim country strategic plan – Turkey (2020–2021)

114. The Turkey Country Director recalled that the country was hosting 4 million refugees, the world's largest refugee population. The 3.6 million refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic had access to free education and health services and 98 percent lived in local communities, with only 65,000 still residing in camps. Since 2016, in partnership with the Government and the Turkish Red Crescent, WFP had been implementing an emergency social safety net (ESSN) that covered the basic needs of refugees living outside camps. A smaller programme served the food and non-food needs of those in camps.
115. The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations had recently selected the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to implement the ESSN from April 2020. WFP was working with the Federation to ensure a smooth handover with no negative consequences for beneficiaries. The ICSP budget had therefore been reduced from the earlier draft presented at the informal consultation, since WFP would be conducting ESSN transfers until the first quarter of 2020.
116. The main aim of WFP's work in Turkey was to ensure that the basic needs of refugees were met and that both refugees and vulnerable people in host communities had access to labour market opportunities. The ICSP added long-term activities aimed at achieving a transition to more sustainable programmes managed by the Government and supported by development partners.
117. Praising the people and Government of Turkey for their generous approach to accommodating refugees in local communities and providing them with access to basic social services, Board members welcomed the ICSP and the Government's involvement in its planning and implementation. Members expressed particular appreciation for the handover plans, support for both refugees and vulnerable local people, work on addressing gender inequalities and support for national institutions. They encouraged WFP to ensure that beneficiary selection and vulnerability criteria were a core element of the handover strategy and said that they looked forward to seeing the results of an evaluation of the pilot project under activity 4 on facilitating access to employment opportunities for refugees and other vulnerable people. The sharing of WFP's experience with that and other ICSP activities would be of worldwide benefit.

Latin America and the Caribbean portfolio

118. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean said that political and social unrest in the region could have humanitarian implications, and an additional 4.5 million people were undernourished.
119. Volatile conditions in Haiti and the Plurinational State of Bolivia put food availability and access at risk. The Bolivian CSP was unfunded and Member State support was needed to enable WFP to prepare for a possible scale-up if the situation worsened. In Haiti an estimated 3.7 million people were acutely food-insecure, and WFP planned to reach an additional 700,000 people in rural and urban areas in the midst of a very complex socioeconomic situation in which insecurity remained a concern. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela WFP had submitted the results of a food security and nutrition assessment to the Government and was awaiting the Government's decision regarding WFP's role in a possible humanitarian response. In accordance with WFP's agreement with the Government the results of the assessment were confidential, and any further action by WFP in the country would require the strict application of humanitarian principles, as well as the sharing of the assessment results with potential donors.
120. Colombia was the country most affected by the Venezuela migration crisis, and the arrival of large numbers of migrants and returnees was affecting the consolidation of the country's peace process. In 2020, with an expected 1.4 million migrants in a situation of food insecurity

in five departments, WFP planned to provide assistance for 440,000 people a month (up from 250,000 in 2019) while also providing the Government with technical assistance on social protection to support migrants. Ecuador hosted at least 370,000 Venezuelan migrants, many of whom lived in conditions of poverty and food insecurity. WFP had provided food assistance for 296,000 of the most vulnerable.

121. In the Dry Corridor of Central America a severe drought in 2018 had pushed 1.4 million people into food insecurity; WFP was updating its food security and nutrition assessment to inform a humanitarian needs overview. Funding shortfalls in 2019 meant that WFP had been able to provide assistance for only 170,000 of 800,000 planned beneficiaries in the Dry Corridor. The Regional Director recalled that food insecurity in the Dry Corridor was a major driver of migration to North America.
122. Within days of the category 5 Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas, WFP had begun to provide food assistance and logistics and telecommunications support through a limited emergency operation. The last phase of the operation – the transfer of responsibilities to the Government – would be completed by the end of 2019.
123. In a region with many middle- and upper-middle-income countries, WFP generated resources from both global and local sources, including local private sector entities. The three components of its strategic vision for the region – emergency preparedness and response, social protection and resilience – were aligned with the priorities of governments, including sustainable infrastructure, human capital development and local and rural transformation. However, the current volatility in the region, resulting mainly from large-scale migration, was putting that strategy at risk, and WFP might require a more humanitarian-focused approach if the situation continued to worsen.
124. Board members commended WFP's work in Latin America and the Caribbean and emphasized the relevance of its approach in middle-income countries, where root causes and the humanitarian-development nexus were very important and there were opportunities to foster South-South cooperation.

2019/EB.2/14 Interim country strategic plan – Caribbean interim multi-country strategic plan (2020–2021)

125. In its presentation of the Caribbean interim multi-country strategic plan (IMCSP), management emphasized that IMCSP implementation would build on initial efforts, with a stronger focus on end-to-end supply chain management and logistics coordination within the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and its participating states; on identifying priority areas for government efforts to strengthen social protection systems to make them more responsive to the most vulnerable before, during and after disasters; and on other areas outlined in the plan. Partnerships were considered essential to the overall IMCSP approach, which was pre-emptive in addressing challenges and identified needs based on the transfer of skills and knowledge in WFP core capacities with a view to minimizing the need for and scope of WFP emergency responses.
126. Noting the Caribbean's vulnerability to hurricanes, other natural hazards and other socioeconomic shocks as a result of climate change impacts, Board members commended WFP's response to hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 and Dorian in 2019. Board members supported the IMCSP's aims, particularly with regard to addressing poverty and inequality and the effects of climate change with a view to enhancing livelihoods. There was a reminder of the need to address gender inequalities in the implementation of the IMCSP and in particular to address the needs of rural women.
127. Recognizing that the IMCSP responded to the needs of several countries with varying levels of development, Board members said that the plan should focus on evidence generation and consultation that responded to identified needs of communities, national governments

and regional institutions. One board member stressed the importance of knowledge transfer, and others welcomed the sharing of lessons learned within and outside of the Caribbean, including among small island developing States and through South-South and triangular cooperation and in the context of the Pacific IMCSP, particularly given WFP's extensive global field experience in emergency preparedness and response.

128. Board members also applauded WFP's support for addressing the nexus between humanitarian aid and development. Members of the Board expressed pleasure that WFP had engaged with a range of humanitarian actors in planning and developing the IMCSP, saying that it had contributed to a coherent plan in which the interests of small island States were recognized and emergency response and development capacities could be efficiently transferred. The outcomes would include improved food security, resilience and sustainability. Several board members also commented on the importance of a flexible approach in implementing the IMCSP, particularly in the context of the specific challenges facing each State and territory and the threat of climate impacts.
129. Management thanked all donors for their contributions but said that more funding was required to address all identified needs. The Board's attention was drawn to the need for adaptation to place WFP in a position where it could help to forestall the impact of disasters; natural hazards could not be prevented, but increased knowledge and preparedness investments would pave the way for life-saving and life-enhancing operational approaches.

2019/EB.2/15 Interim country strategic plan – Cuba (2020)

130. The Country Director said that the aims of the ICSP for 2020 were to improve social protection and agricultural production systems, ensure that food assistance reached the most vulnerable people and increase resilience to natural disasters. Food items had been pre-positioned for rapid disaster response and innovative pilot projects had been set up. The recent fuel shortage had hampered monitoring and the delivery of programmes. Another issue to be addressed was the increasing incidence of obesity.
131. Board members praised the alignment of the ICSP with national plans for economic development and recommended that WFP work with the Government to define precise areas for collaboration. Members endorsed WFP's support for social and economic development, but observed that some resources would have to be directed to countering the effects of economic sanctions that were impeding development. Board members agreed that improved food production and distribution systems were needed, especially for vulnerable groups, and proposed that current pilot projects involving cash-based transfers, improved early-warning systems and school feeding be incorporated into a national system that would promote full access to food, enhanced community resilience and the empowerment of women. Work with the RBAs and the Government on enhanced value chains, nutrition, social protection and food security was a priority.
132. Board members recommended that national and local systems and capacities for decision making in disaster response management be optimized; that more food be pre-positioned; and that the fuel crisis be included in the operational risk register. They urged WFP to exploit its comparative advantages, include a focus on gender issues in all operations and seek synergies with the other RBAs and other partners.
133. The Country Director thanked the Board members for their supportive comments. New products for school feeding and local food production activities were being sought with a view to extending diet choices; and it was hoped that school feeding could be extended to include external school pupils. The fuel crisis, which had occurred after the ICSP was finalized, would be included in the risk register as recommended.

2019/EB.2/16 Revision of Peru country strategic plan and corresponding budget increase

134. The Country Director presented the adjusted budget for the Peru CSP, which reflected a considerable increase in funding secured through a successful blend of advocacy, innovation and private sector partnership. She noted that the business model used in Peru could be applicable in other middle-income countries facing similar challenges. Among the highlights of WFP's recent work in Peru she cited the *Cocina Con Causa* television programme, capacity-strengthening activities for improving disaster preparedness, and advocacy efforts that had helped to put addressing anaemia on the national agenda.
135. Board members welcomed the increase in budget, observing that the additional activities would make a valuable contribution to efforts to tackle malnutrition, strengthen disaster preparedness and extend social protection to the rising number of migrants in Peru. Some members highlighted the importance of South–South cooperation in sharing knowledge and best practices; others praised WFP's alignment with national priorities, emphasizing that the Government clearly trusted in WFP's capacity to address food security challenges, such as anaemia and obesity and overweight, that persisted in middle-income countries.
136. Noting that public–private partnerships lay behind the 158 percent budget increase, the Regional Director described WFP's ability to support national priorities through knowledge transfer while also ensuring that governments committed to their goals. He assured the Board that WFP was continuing to look for new South–South cooperation projects and innovative activities that would bring direct benefits to vulnerable populations.
137. The Deputy Executive Director added that WFP expected to raise 87 percent of the money needed to fund the increase in the budget due to the revision; 50 percent of that funding had already been secured, an excellent situation for a country office. He emphasized the value of the country office business model, saying that WFP had a role to play in development contexts, tackling resilience and root causes and successfully fundraising outside of the traditional humanitarian portfolio.

West Africa portfolio

138. The Regional Director updated the Board on the situation in the Sahel, where insecurity continued to spread, displacing populations and exacerbating food insecurity. Non-state armed groups were proliferating, particularly in marginalized areas with high unemployment and poor access to basic services. Working with partners, WFP had explored the complex factors that drove people to join such groups, which ranged from the need to protect their families, livelihoods or communities to a desire to obtain land, money or other economic benefits.
139. These insights had implications for WFP operations in the region: while implementing resilience activities at scale, it was vital to be perceived as reinforcing the state, not replacing it. Together with its partners, WFP was also implementing a regional coordination and support strategy that was sensitive to country-specific needs and was based on access and community acceptance, targeting, conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive programming.
140. In closing, the Regional Director highlighted successes in Ghana, where a public–private partnership was strengthening agriculture and nutrition value chains, and in Côte d'Ivoire, where the Centre of Excellence Against Hunger and Malnutrition was working with various stakeholders to optimize value chains and examine the impact of innovative solutions on smallholder farmers' productivity.
141. Board members observed that conflict and climate change continued to drive food insecurity in the Sahel and around the world. They urged the international community to do more to support governments in the Sahel in their efforts to secure peace and stability. One member noted recent progress made in Cameroon through a national dialogue and at the

Paris Peace Forum. Another underlined the importance of national self-sufficiency in food production, noting that hunger fuelled instability. One member requested an update on the Level 3 response in central Sahel.

142. Responding to the comments the Regional Director said that the Level 3 emergency response had been declared for Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger in September 2019. WFP had set up a support and coordination cell in Dakar and was examining strategies for initiating negotiations on access with non-state groups, gaining community acceptance and harmonizing approaches in the three countries. WFP was augmenting staffing, including the number of protection officers.
143. The Regional Director underscored the contribution that WFP could make to fostering peace through well-designed programmes that built resilience and strengthened social cohesion. He added that a combination of school feeding activities, support for smallholders and infrastructure projects needed to be implemented over several years to give communities food security and stable livelihoods, which in turn would hopefully stem recruitment by non-state groups.
144. The Chief of Staff warned that despite the attention that the Sahel had received in recent years more needed to be done. He identified insufficient coordination between governments and the international community as a weakness and called on both sides to adopt a more integrated, holistic approach to the challenges in the region.

2019/EB.2/17 Summary report on the evaluation of the WFP corporate (Level 3) emergency response in northeast Nigeria (2016–2018) and management response

145. The evaluation covered WFP's activities from 2016 to 2018 in a context of conflict, displacement and food insecurity. It found that operations had been appropriate and based on sound assessments, but the relationship between the assessments and planning had not been clear. The nutrition strategy had been adapted to the circumstances; the cash-based transfer programme was appropriate, but inadequate assessment of the most appropriate delivery mechanisms had led to problems. Some protection risks and some opportunities for gender analysis had been missed. The programme had not fully reflected international humanitarian principles, and decisions had been made with insufficient attention to coherence among partners. Food assistance and nutrition activities had been scaled up rapidly but had fallen short of targets, with little evidence of outcomes. WFP's common services had exceeded targets. Operations were relatively well resourced but faced frequent changes in leadership and other challenges. The rapid scale-up had been impressive, but there had been limited progress in building national capacities and accountability. The stabilization of food security could be associated with the scale of WFP assistance, and saving lives remained a priority.
146. The Regional Director, noting that there had been no previous direct operations in Nigeria to build on, paid tribute to all staff in a complex operation and added that specialist teams were being deployed to enhance programme implementation. Of the seven recommendations in the evaluation document, management agreed with four and partially agreed with three.
147. Board members expressed appreciation for WFP's achievements in a challenging situation but said there was a need to address all beneficiary targets, to accord greater attention to gender issues and staff safety and security and to improve capacity building and knowledge-transfer systems. Some members requested more detailed information about the cash-based elements of the programme, observing that the deployment of specialist staff required higher levels of funding. Board members said that WFP's common services, especially UNHAS, had been excellent, and that its work to improve humanitarian access had met with some success. Board members recommended the establishment of closer

links to the protection cluster, improved monitoring, especially in remote areas, and an exit strategy to be shared with the Board. Clarification of the use of waivers was requested.

148. Board members also praised the openness of management's response, particularly in acknowledging the need to coordinate more effectively with the Government and partners and to balance needs with the application of humanitarian principles, ensuring that operational effectiveness was not compromised. Board members recommended that in a volatile situation WFP should take projections of future scenarios into account to the extent possible, for example by establishing a system for deploying temporary staff without affecting other activities.
149. The evaluation team explained that waivers had been applied in connection with contracting for cash programming and staff recruitment.
150. Management agreed that greater engagement with the Government was needed and that adherence to humanitarian principles must be paramount. Management acknowledged the need to move to a programme based on the enhancement of livelihoods wherever possible but pointed out that greater stability in conflict-affected areas and improved humanitarian access would be needed to achieve that. WFP was striving to ensure reserve capacity for non-presence countries, including through the regional directors group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and through training in those countries carried out in partnership with OCHA and resident coordinators.

2019/EB.2/18 Country strategic plan – Mali (2020–2024)

151. The Mali Country Director outlined changes made to the CSP document in response to feedback from Board members during discussions on previous drafts. They included greater emphasis on coherence with the actions of other United Nations agencies and partners, the UNSDCF and the humanitarian response plan; strengthened commitment to conflict-sensitivity, protection and principled humanitarian action; a reinforced approach to capacity building for national partners and communities; and an emphasis on flexibility given the complexity and fluidity of the situation in Mali.
152. Board members welcomed the CSP and the consultative manner in which it had been developed with the Government, donors and other stakeholders. They commended the country office's analysis of the situation in Mali and approved of the CSP's central focus on emergency response while also investing in resilience; the strengthening of gender and youth, protection and environmental issues; local production; and partnerships, including South–South collaboration. They expressed gratification at the increased use of cash-based transfers and encouraged WFP to continue to mitigate the associated risks.
153. Members requested further information on the cost of CSP implementation and resource shortfalls; the rationale for selecting assistance modalities; the role of national partners in enhancing food security; and WFP's plans for responding to a possible deterioration in the country's situation with increased population displacements.
154. Some members said that activities related to the return of internally displaced persons were not clearly indicated. There were also concerns regarding the risk of the effects of climate change leading to increased food insecurity, as well as the need to manage dwindling water resources effectively and to protect overused soils.
155. Noting the need for flexible funding for addressing the root causes of food insecurity and building resilience, members encouraged WFP to broaden its funding sources and called on donors to provide such funding.
156. Responding to the questions, the Country Director said that the country office had experience of a successful rapid scale-up in operations in 2018 and was analysing partners' response and scale-up capacities, particularly for the use of cash-based transfers. It was also enhancing its own capacities for early warning and risk management. At the same time, the

complex situation in the country posed challenges to accurate scenario planning, which would be revised regularly. National capacity-strengthening was expected to improve the national response to existing needs, reducing them over time.

2019/EB.2/19 Country strategic plan – the Niger (2020–2024)

157. The Niger Country Director introduced the CSP for the country for 2020–2024. With a budget of USD 1.1 billion, the CSP foresaw the strengthening of WFP's emergency response capacity in response to the country's volatile security situation, along with the scaling up of resilience building activities in line with the Government's priorities through the national economic and social development plan and the "Nigeriens Nourishing Nigeriens" (3N) initiative. The CSP would support the efforts to bridge the humanitarian-development divide and capacity strengthening for national counterparts.
158. Board members applauded the well-designed plan, particularly its alignment with national priorities and policies and use of and support for national delivery systems for crisis response, social protection and other initiatives; its attention to both humanitarian and development needs; the capacity strengthening activities based on analysis of institutional needs; the people-centred and gender-transformative approach to work on food security and nutrition; joint efforts with the Government, other United Nations agencies and financing institutions at the regional and subregional levels, including in particular the other RBAs; the planned shift to multipurpose cash-based transfers, which would help to strengthen value chains and markets; contingency planning for the deterioration of the security situation and an increase in the number of displaced people; the provisions relevant to protection; and the well elaborated exit strategies. They welcomed WFP's willingness to adopt innovations that reduced the risk of disaster linked to climate change and looked forward to the planned evaluation of the impact of the CSP, which featured one of WFP's first multi-year resilience-building programmes.
159. Urging the country office to maintain its emergency preparedness and response capacities and focus on integrated resilience activities to protect livelihoods and foster long-term recovery, members asked for more information on contingency measures and prioritization plans for responding to budget shortfalls or an escalation of conflict in neighbouring countries. They also sought clarification on collaboration with other development actors, in particular the other RBAs; on how WFP would address the funding shortage and operational difficulties facing UNHAS; on how WFP's resilience activities would complement the World Bank's adaptive social protection activities; on how the restriction of humanitarian space and spillover from neighbouring countries might affect WFP operations; and whether WFP would participate in the 3N initiative. When filling gaps in human resources, it was essential that WFP and its implementing partners use only qualified personnel. The use of food fortification was necessary but should be temporary, and locally produced and varied nutritious food should be the long-term goal. WFP should ensure that its analysis of institutional needs in respect of nutrition was based on consultations with partners; should work with men and boys as part of its efforts to alleviate the impact of food insecurity on women and girls; and should ensure that staff were sufficiently trained. In investing in value chains WFP, in coordination with UNICEF, should ensure that systems were nutrition sensitive, and the CSP should be updated to reflect this. In addition WFP should make clear how monitoring would take into account the differing impact of crisis and WFP activities on different vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. Dealing with dwindling water resources and overused soils would be key to achieving resilience and sustainable development.
160. In response to points raised, the Country Director said that the three principals of the RBAs had visited the Niger to observe RBA collaboration in August 2018. The Niger was a pilot country for the RBAs' resilience building projects in support of government efforts; WFP had strengthened monitoring and evaluation to improve the evidence base for resilience

activities. WFP ran the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service for all humanitarian actors, and the Country Director called for donor contributions to fill its current funding gap. WFP had signed a cooperation agreement with government ministries and the World Bank, which included collaboration on resilience work, including to strengthen the national adaptive social protection initiative. WFP would always prioritize urgent humanitarian response, which was a key part of the CSP; under the central Sahel L3 it was strengthening its emergency response capacity further, and it would always work in concert with the Government in responding to crises. Activities under the CSP would align with government priorities and programmes, including the 3N initiative. WFP based its work on participatory community planning, taking into account the differing needs of all, and it was committed to protection, with one country office staff member devoted solely to that topic.

2019/EB.2/20 Country strategic plan – Sierra Leone (2020–2024)

161. The Country Director presented the CSP, which introduced strategic changes in the areas of school feeding, nutrition, support for smallholder farmers, capacity building, crisis response and the promotion of gender equality. Under the leadership of the Government, WFP would broaden its donor and partner portfolio in Sierra Leone with a view to maximizing impact and increasing cost efficiency.
162. Board members praised the CSP's focus on capacity building, disaster risk reduction and supply chain management, which represented a move away from direct implementation towards filling gaps in national response and building national capacities. Members highlighted the support for school feeding, observing that access to quality education was key to building community resilience and creating jobs. Gender inequality was seen as a particular challenge, and members urged WFP to address it through all its activities.
163. Members noted that the CSP harnessed WFP's comparative advantage and was well integrated with government programmes and the UNSDCF. One member observed that planning, monitoring and evaluation would become increasingly important during implementation of the CSP and encouraged WFP to provide support in those areas.
164. The Country Director assured the Board that gender equality lay at the heart of WFP's programming in the country. For instance, the country office sought to give local women's groups a central role in home-grown school feeding activities whenever possible. WFP was also studying how to scale up job creation activities and was working on a project with the United Nations Development Programme that brought together development and peacebuilding work.
165. The Regional Director paid tribute to the significant contribution of funding for school feeding from the Government of Sierra Leone, in spite of the many challenges facing the country. Referring to the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Deputy Executive Director added that the school feeding component of the CSP would help to extend children's access to their basic rights.

East Africa portfolio

166. The Regional Director described the main challenges currently facing East Africa, highlighting drought and flooding in the Horn of Africa, the continued Level 3 response in South Sudan and the latest developments in the fight against Ebola.
167. She reported that WFP was responding to rising food insecurity in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and parts of Uganda through school feeding activities, cash-based transfers and technical assistance in emergency preparedness and response. With heavy rainfall forecast to continue to the end of the year, all four governments had requested WFP support through the delivery of in-kind food assistance aimed at mitigating the impact of flooding on the most vulnerable people.

168. Flooding was also devastating parts of South Sudan, destroying crops and infrastructure and leaving 755,000 people in need of emergency food assistance. The Regional Director underscored the huge funding gap hampering WFP's response to the flooding, warning that delays in the pre-positioning of stocks and in reaching affected populations could have catastrophic consequences.
169. Turning to Ebola, the Regional Director reported a dramatic fall in new cases reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 126 per week in April 2019 to just 9 in the week before the current Board session. WFP was scaling down its regional preparedness activities, leaving facilities intact in case of a resurgence of the virus.
170. In closing, the Regional Director highlighted WFP's priorities for 2020 in the region: support for countries affected by flooding and drought; attention to potential political changes in Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan; deepened partnerships with the World Bank and the African Development Bank; and enhanced information sharing with institutions in support of the work of the African Union.

2019/EB.2/21 Country strategic plan – Djibouti (2020–2024)

171. The Country Director introduced the CSP, which was founded on strong partnerships, country capacity building, vocational training, supply chain management and evidence-based programming. The plan sought to contribute to government efforts to develop a sustainable and inclusive national social protection system accessible to Djiboutians and refugees alike.
172. Despite its status as a lower-middle-income country, Djibouti continued to face significant challenges in terms of infrastructure and financial resources. With a strong focus on fostering gender equality, the CSP complemented the plans and visions of other partners in the country, including the Government, the African Union and other United Nations agencies.
173. Board members welcomed the CSP, describing it as an appropriate response to the situation in Djibouti, a country facing significant levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among rural and refugee populations. Members praised the hospitality of the Government in welcoming the many refugees that it had received.
174. Several members commended the CSP for its focus on gender equality, South–South cooperation, school feeding and adaptation to climate change. Noting its close alignment with government priorities, members said that the CSP would support the implementation of social protection measures and would close the gap between humanitarian and development work, not least by promoting complementarity with other actors in the country.

Southern Africa portfolio

175. In the absence of the Regional Director, who was unable to attend the session, the acting Regional Director presented the regional overview. In Southern Africa 45 million people were severely food-insecure, mainly as a result of erratic weather and climate extremes. WFP was preparing to provide emergency assistance for 7 million people in eight countries, but all of its operations were underfunded.
176. In Zimbabwe, the worst hunger emergency for a decade had affected 5.5 million people. In the affected communities 3.6 million people – a third of the rural population – were expected to be severely food insecure by January 2020. WFP planned to provide support for 2.7 million people, including 100,000 in urban areas. In Mozambique, following drought and cyclone damage, WFP planned to provide emergency support for 1.25 million people during the peak lean season and recovery, reconstruction and resilience building activities for another 1.2 million people.

177. Increased food insecurity in Zambia, traditionally a bread basket, had left 2.3 million people severely hungry. WFP was supporting the Government's emergency response by procuring and delivering pulses and transporting local maize meal to vulnerable districts. Namibia's worst drought in a generation had halved cereal production and caused large-scale livestock losses. WFP planned to provide lean season assistance for 380,000 of the most vulnerable people, including about 100,000 receiving anti-retroviral treatment.
178. WFP also planned to provide support for 170,000 people in Lesotho, 750,000 in Madagascar, 660,000 in Malawi and 160,000 in Eswatini. It was monitoring the drought-induced hunger crisis in Southern Angola.
179. The planning, design and execution of WFP's work to address the root causes of hunger and build resilience to climate change were led by local communities themselves. Initiatives included soil and water conservation, promotion of drought-resistant crops, reduction of post-harvest losses and efforts to increase smallholder farmers' access to markets, credit and insurance.
180. Following further intensification of the humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, almost 16 million people were acutely food insecure, making the hunger emergency there the world's second largest, smaller only than that of Yemen. WFP was increasing its support for displaced people and its work to prevent and treat acute malnutrition. WFP's Level 3 emergency response had been extended to cover the Kasai-Oriental region – the epicentre of a nationwide measles epidemic that had claimed more than 4,000 lives in 2019. The number of reported new Ebola cases in the country had declined, but insecurity and community distrust of responders impeded access to affected areas. WFP was preparing to respond to a potential escalation in cases. Plans were being made to assist more than 500,000 refugees throughout Southern Africa, and 15,000 who had returned voluntarily from Angola to the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been provided with take-home rations. All of WFP's operations for refugees were facing sizable funding shortfalls.
181. Southern Africa had been selected as the first pilot region for the rollout of WFP's ten-year global school feeding strategy, through which many smallholders and other population groups would benefit from pioneering new projects. Through a public-private-partnership up to 10,000 smallholders were set to benefit from integration into a value chain for the supply of raw root to a mill in the Republic of the Congo, which was expected to yield 16,000 tonnes of flour per year, part of which would support WFP's school feeding programme.
182. Board members thanked WFP for its strong commitment to the region and joined the acting Regional Director in calling on donors to support WFP's efforts to stop rising hunger and malnutrition in Southern Africa.
183. The Deputy Executive Director added that conditions in the region provided an opportunity for WFP to demonstrate the value and importance of operating at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

2019/EB.2/22 Country strategic plan – Eswatini (2020–2024)

184. The Head of Office introduced the CSP for Eswatini for the period 2020–2024. WFP planned to provide capacity strengthening, technical assistance for policy reforms, systems strengthening and knowledge management with the aim of making social protection programmes in Eswatini more effective and responsive to the needs of vulnerable people, including people living with disabilities and HIV/AIDS. The CSP was closely aligned with national development priorities and plans.
185. In response to crises, WFP would provide food and nutrition assistance, especially where needs exceeded the Government's capacity to respond. Support for smallholder farmers would involve working with the Government and FAO in linking smallholder farmers to

markets, including school feeding programmes, which WFP aimed to transform into a sustainable home-grown school feeding programme.

186. Board members commended the CSP as an appropriate response in a country facing high unemployment and HIV rates, low incomes and the effects of climate change and El Niño. With 70 percent of the population dependent on subsistence agriculture, members welcomed the plan's incorporation of resilience building activities into crisis response, which aimed at improving productivity and storage facilities and helping smallholder farmers to start supplying food for urban markets. The launch of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming earlier in the year emphasized the importance of smallholder farming to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.
187. Members encouraged the country office to enhance its capacity strengthening work with the Government, civil society organizations and other partners involved in the design and implementation of WFP programmes and projects; to collaborate with the Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil; and to promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge with other countries in the region. Partnerships would be essential, including with FAO.
188. After approval of the CSP, Senator Themba Masuku, Eswatini Deputy Prime Minister, thanked WFP and the Board for endorsing the strategic plan, saying that collaboration and investment could maximize benefits for the vulnerable, enhance rural development and empower agriculture and social protection.

2019/EB.2/23 Interim country strategic plan – Angola (2020–2022)

189. The acting Regional Director for Southern Africa presented the ICSP for Angola, which was aimed at meeting the food and nutrition needs of refugees living in Angola, increasing their self-reliance by promoting income-generating opportunities, and strengthening the Government's capacities with regard to school feeding, nutrition and vulnerability analysis. Aligned with national priorities and United Nations objectives, the ICSP was based on a thorough assessment of refugees' needs, WFP achievements and best practices.
190. Board members welcomed the ICSP, particularly its alignment with the Angolan inter-agency refugee response and the UNSDCF. Members praised the analysis, strategic approach and risk mitigation measures set out in the document, which accurately reflected the challenges faced in the country.
191. Members emphasized the importance of cooperation with other United Nations agencies in the area of refugee support and encouraged WFP to seek innovative approaches that could also be used in other countries. Some members highlighted the need to tackle gender inequality in Angola; others urged WFP to work with the World Bank to identify ways of supporting government efforts to build human capital.
192. There was praise for the South-South cooperation component of the ICSP and general recognition of the value of the technical assistance that would be provided to the Government. Members also commended the contribution of funding by the host Government and WFP's efforts to promote social cohesion and the peaceful coexistence of host and refugee communities.

Asia and the Pacific portfolio

193. The Regional Director updated the Board on the situation in Asia and the Pacific, the region most exposed to the impacts of climate change in the world. WFP was helping governments to forecast and prepare for disasters, analyse impacts and needs quickly and coordinate humanitarian actors effectively. Recent national emergency responses in Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines demonstrated the excellent progress being made in some

countries, but investments were still needed to fully equip governments to manage disaster risk and respond to shocks.

194. In Afghanistan, intensified violence had caused over 8,000 civilian deaths since the start of the year. WFP had extended operations into hard-to-reach areas, where active fighting had left populations with limited access to livelihoods and basic services. WFP would scale up operations to assist 7.2 million food-insecure people in early 2020 while continuing to implement resilience-building projects and to provide technical assistance to the Government.
195. The situation of Rohingya people on both sides of the Bangladesh–Myanmar border remained extremely worrisome, particularly regarding their limited access to livelihoods and education and restrictions on freedom of movement and communication. Little progress had been made on securing the prerequisites for a safe, dignified and sustainable return of displaced Rohingya, and the segregation of the population was becoming entrenched.
196. Despite the challenges, WFP had secured unrivalled access in Myanmar, reaching 300,000 vulnerable people in Rakhine State and bringing communities together through small-scale public works in the north of the country. In Bangladesh, WFP operations supported 840,000 refugees, 200,000 nutritionally vulnerable mothers and children and 400,000 schoolchildren. WFP was expanding the use of cash-based transfers and had been the first agency to biometrically register all the refugees in the area of Cox's Bazar, paving the way for their broader financial inclusion.
197. Board members thanked the Regional Director for the update, underscoring the importance of disaster preparedness in the region. One member applauded WFP's work to build capacity through the Pacific IMCSP, noting that it would be valuable for WFP teams in the Pacific and the Caribbean to exchange lessons learned.

Organizational and procedural matters

2019/EB.2/24 Biennial programme of work of the Executive Board (2020–2021)

198. The Secretary recalled that, in accordance with a recommendation by the Working Group on Governance approved by the Board in 2000, at each second regular session the Board approved its programme of work for the forthcoming biennium. Noting that the programme of work included both items required by the WFP rules and regulations and items requested by the Board as well as by management, she said that the programme of work was a living document that with the advice of the Bureau was updated as needed, including in response to Member State requests submitted through the List convenors, and that among other things it served as a basis for the scheduling of intersessional consultations, updates and similar events.

Summary of the work of the Executive Board

2019/EB.2/25 Summary of the work of the Executive Board

199. The President reported that the rapporteur for the Board's 2019 annual session had prepared the summary of that session and that a draft of it had been distributed to Board members in October 2019.

Verification of adopted decisions and recommendations

200. Introducing the item the President highlighted a number of the decisions adopted by the Board at the current session, including those on the private sector partnerships and fundraising strategy, the local and regional food procurement policy, the management plan covering 2021, the revised charter for the Office of the Inspector General and other important matters such as HSHAPD. The Rapporteur then confirmed that the decisions and recommendations presented in the draft compilation of decisions and recommendations adopted by the Board at the current session corresponded to those that had been agreed during the session, noting that the decision on agenda item 4 e) had been adopted as amended during the session. The final versions of the adopted decisions and recommendations would be posted on the Board's website within one working day of the conclusion of the session.

Acronyms

CSP	country strategic plan
ESSN	emergency social safety net
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HSHAPD	harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMCSP	interim multi-country strategic plan
IRM	Integrated Road Map
KPI	key performance indicator
RBA	Rome-based agency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework
UNSF	United Nations strategic framework