



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

Executive Board
Second regular session
Rome, 16–20 November 2020

Distribution: General	Agenda item 6
Date: 15 October 2020	WFP/EB.2/2020/6-A/Add.1
Original: English	Evaluation reports
	For consideration

Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

Management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Cameroon (2018–2020)

Background

1. This document presents the management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Cameroon (2018–2020).
2. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning and role; the extent and quality of WFP's specific contributions to CSP strategic outcomes; efficiency; the factors that explain WFP's performance; and the extent to which WFP has made the strategic shift expected over the period from 2017 to mid-2019. It provides evaluative evidence for learning with regard to WFP's performance and the development of the next CSP and ensures accountability to WFP stakeholders.
3. The evaluation made six main recommendations, each with several related, more detailed sub-recommendations. Three recommendations are strategic, while the others are operational. They are to be implemented by the country office with support from various headquarters divisions and units and the Regional Bureau for West Africa in Dakar (RBD).
4. The evaluation covered WFP operations in Cameroon between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2019 including activities and strategic direction prior to the introduction of the CSP in 2018. The evaluation was conducted from June 2019 to April 2020 by a team of independent consultants with expertise in humanitarian and development settings.
5. The following matrix sets out whether WFP management agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the recommendations and sub-recommendations and presents planned (or completed) actions and the related responsibilities and timelines for implementation of the recommendations.

Focal points:

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CAMEROON (2018–2020)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations (with completion dates in brackets)	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
Recommendation 1: Strengthen the strategic approaches to nutrition, resilience and capacity strengthening. (2021)	Country office (regional bureau, Nutrition Division (NUT), Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division (PRO), (Resilience and Prevention Unit (OSZPR) and Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit (OSZIS).	Agreed			
1.1 Nutrition	Country office	Agreed		Country office nutrition unit (regional bureau nutrition unit)	December 2021
i) Position WFP more clearly as a contributor to a government-led multi-stakeholder preventive strategy and implementation of a joint monitoring and evaluation system.			i) WFP will advocate and provide support for joint evidence-based, multisector nutrition programmes and integrated nutrition information systems.		
ii) Strengthen the sustainability of nutrition-specific services in emergencies.			ii) WFP will continue to build the capacity of the Government and partners in WFP-supported emergency nutrition programmes. The geographical targeting of WFP's emergency nutrition response will be refined and resource mobilization for sustaining activities at the desired scale and within the desired timeframe will be strengthened. Work with the private sector on the local development of fortified foods will continue.		

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<p>iii) Reinforce nutrition-sensitive programming with:</p> <p>a) contextualized analyses of the underlying causes of malnutrition;</p> <p>b) systematic identification of opportunities in the next CSP; and</p> <p>c) reformulation of field-level agreements.</p>			<p>iii) a) Leveraging its expertise in food security analysis and assessment, WFP will strengthen operational research in and the evidence base for the prevention of malnutrition – including by conducting fill-the-nutrient gap analysis and defining links between nutrition outcomes and food systems – in order to inform the design of nutrition-sensitive programmes throughout WFP’s portfolio.</p> <p>iii) b) A social and behaviour change communication strategy will be developed to complement WFP’s nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions. The strategy will be aligned with the national nutrition communication strategy and the WFP corporate strategy on social and behaviour change communication and will contribute to the improvement of nutrition outcomes in the next CSP.</p> <p>iii) c) Where funding allows, the duration of field-level agreements will be aligned with the needs of the country office and cooperating partners so as to ensure operational efficiency and effectiveness.</p>	Country office nutrition and vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) units (regional bureau nutrition and VAM units)	June 2021

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1.2 Resilience	Country office	Agreed		Country office livelihoods unit	December 2021
i) Expand the rollout of community-based participatory planning for resilience programming.			i) With support from the regional bureau, the country office has developed and is implementing a resilience strategy that incorporates the three-pronged approach, including community-based participatory planning.		
ii) Develop community-based integrated packages for resilience.			ii) Community-based integrated packages for resilience will be developed in partnership with the Government, the other Rome-based agencies, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).	Country office livelihoods unit	June 2021
iii) Strengthen the implementation of the 2018 multi-year food assistance for assets (FFA) strategy linked with the WFP smallholders support strategy in collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies.			iii) The 2018 multi-year food assistance for assets (FFA) strategy will be reviewed and linked to the WFP smallholder support strategy in collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies.	Country office livelihoods and FFA units (regional bureau resilience unit)	December 2021
iv) Operationalize the triple nexus principles and priorities, learning from the effects of WFP actions in conflict dynamics and the “do no harm” principle.			iv) WFP is actively involved in the working group on the triple nexus, alongside other United Nations humanitarian and development agencies and NGOs. The principles and priorities of the triple nexus will be implemented through design workshops and training in preparation for the next CSP (2022–2025). Implementation of the recommendation of the Joint Steering	Country office livelihoods and FFA units (regional bureau and headquarters resilience and FFA units)	December 2021

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			<p>Committee will inform the WFP country office on the integration of peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity into conflict analysis.</p> <p>In accordance with the global agreement between WFP and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the country office will liaise with headquarters on the feasibility of establishing a one-year knowledge partnership as part of WFP's wider efforts to strengthen the contribution of its food assistance to improving the prospects for peace.</p>		
1.3 Capacity strengthening	Country office	Agreed		Country office livelihoods and FFA units (regional bureau and headquarters resilience and FFA units)	December 2021
i) Develop a capacity strengthening strategy at the organizational, enabling-environment, and individual levels.			i) A multi-level capacity strengthening plan that contributes to enhanced capacity to deliver on CSP objectives will be developed.		
ii) Prioritize WFP's comparative advantages in Cameroon.			ii) WFP will conduct an assessment of needs for government capacity strengthening in areas in which WFP has a comparative advantage in Cameroon – management of food and nutrition assistance programmes, social protection, emergency preparedness and response, food security monitoring and analysis, disaster management, and supply chain services.		

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iii) Define WFP's role in strengthening national capacity in social safety nets in partnership with: a) the World Bank and UNHCR on targeting and identification systems; b) UNICEF on school feeding for health and nutrition; and c) FAO on home-grown school feeding.			iii) WFP will work in partnership with other United Nations agencies on strengthening national capacity in social protection and the delivery of social safety nets.		
Recommendation 2: Enhance strategic partnerships, funding and advocacy. (2022)	Country office (regional bureau, Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division (PPR), Private Partnerships and Fundraising Division (PPF) and Communications, Advocacy and Marketing Division (CAM))	Agreed			
2.1 Finalize the fundraising strategy, in line with the next CSP strategic priorities focusing on:		Agreed			
i) diversification of funding sources;			i) a) An internal review and brainstorming session will be conducted with the aim of mapping existing and potential partners that could serve as diverse funding sources.	Country office (regional bureau, PPR, PPF and CAM)	May 2020
			i) b) The draft fundraising strategy and partnership action plan will be finalized in line with the next CSP.	Country office (regional bureau, PPR, PPF and CAM)	June 2021

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ii) resource mobilization for national capacity strengthening; and			ii) WFP will consult existing donors with a view to positioning itself as a key partner for national capacity strengthening in the next CSP.	Country office (regional bureau, PPR, PPF and CAM)	May 2021
iii) positioning of WFP as an implementing agency for programmes funded by the Government.			iii) Government partners will be consulted on the potential for WFP to tap into national resources, including those from international financial institutions.	Country office (the regional bureau)	May 2021
2.2 Deepen donor engagement in technical dialogue based on evidence and lessons learned from WFP's experience.		Agreed	i) Regular donor briefings will be held for sharing updates on operations, challenges and any evidence and lessons learned from WFP's ongoing interventions. Donors will be provided with first-hand information and invited to provide feedback and comments.	Country office donor relations unit (regional bureau partnerships unit)	December 2021
			ii) Relevant donors will be invited to participate in technical reviews and missions where possible.	Country office donor relations unit (regional bureau partnerships unit)	December 2021
2.3 Strengthen partnerships to support programming and strategic priorities in:	Country office programme unit	Agreed.	Actions to strengthen partnerships that support programming and strategic priorities include the following:	Country office programme, livelihoods and FFA units	December 2021
i) FFA in refugee settings – UNHCR;			i) FFA projects are being implemented for refugee host communities in collaboration with UNHCR and cooperating partners.		

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ii) a joint implementation strategy to support smallholders using lessons learned on food systems - FAO and IFAD;			<p>ii) a) A strategy for the implementation of smallholder agriculture market support initiatives was developed in January 2020 in collaboration with the Government and with support from the regional bureau resilience unit.</p> <p>ii) b) In August 2020, the country office and IFAD signed a memorandum of understanding on reinforcing government capacity to support smallholders, based on lessons learned from WFP's work on food systems. In addition, a joint project on implementing a resilience programme in the Far North region has been developed with FAO.</p>	Country office programme, nutrition, livelihoods and FFA units	
iii) national capacity to implement an effective nutrition strategy – UNICEF;			<p>iii) a) In collaboration with UNICEF, WFP is providing the national inter-ministerial committee for the fight against malnutrition with support for the creation of regional level committees, in accordance with the Government's decentralization process.</p> <p>iii) b) WFP is conducting fill-the-nutrient gap analysis to support the design of evidence based multi-sector nutrition strategies and programmes in Cameroon.</p> <p>iii) c) The national inter-ministerial committee for the fight against malnutrition is being provided with support for dissemination of the Cameroon food guide.</p>	Country office programme and gender and protection units	

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iv) the 2019 United Nations joint resilience programmes and lessons learned – resilience working group;			<p>iv) a) The three-pronged approach planning tool will be rolled out nationally to facilitate the design of resilience building programmes that contribute to the Government’s capacity to achieve zero hunger in Cameroon, encourage all stakeholders to align themselves behind Government and community priorities, and provide the Government with all the training it needs for taking over the three elements of the three-pronged approach. The resilience building programmes should focus on district governments and communities.</p> <p>iv) b) WFP will maintain its active participation in the resilience working group, alongside other United Nations agencies, government institutions and NGOs. Implementation of joint resilience programmes in the East and Far North regions is being monitored and lessons learned exercises are being conducted.</p>	Country office programme and cash-based transfer units	
v) mobilization of additional technical expertise on gender and protection –Plan International, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies;			v) The country office gender and protection unit works closely with United Nations and NGO partners on mobilizing additional technical expertise in gender and protection issues with the aim of providing enhanced support to the Government. Partners include the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, GenCap, Plan International, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Population Fund. All FFA projects are thoroughly reviewed to ensure that gender and		

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			protection issues are reflected, and implementation is closely monitored.		
vi) national safety nets project and SCOPE – Ministry of Economic, Planning and Regional Development, the World Bank and UNHCR.			<p>vi) a) The national safety nets project is not yet strong enough to be used in WFP operations. WFP is working with the Government (Ministry of Social Affairs) and UNICEF on setting up a unified social registry that will include beneficiary refugees and internally displaced persons in WFP-assisted areas.</p> <p>vi) b) SCOPE is used systematically and all WFP beneficiaries, including those of resilience activities, are registered on the platform.</p> <p>vi) c) Memoranda of understanding for specific joint activities with these partners will be signed where possible. Joint activities, including joint assessments and training courses, will be carried out.</p>	Country office programme, gender, protection and cash-based transfer units and management	
Recommendation 3: Invest in an evidence base to support the strategic focus and the CSP implementation strategy. (June 2021)	Country office (regional bureau, Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division (RAM), Nutrition Division (OSN), Emergency Operations Division (EME) and the Direct Implementation Programme Service.	Agreed			

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3.1 In partnership with the food security working group and the nutrition multisector coordination group, consolidate a contextual analysis of underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition in order to:	Country office programme unit	Agreed			
i) systematically consider gender and conflict dynamics; and			i) Indicators are systematically disaggregated by sex, and gender-specific indicators and included in assessments. An assessment of social cohesion in Cameroon, which will cover the dynamics of conflict and use qualitative data, is planned for early 2021.	Country office programme, –VAM and nutrition units	December 2021
ii) identify opportunities for WFP programming recognizing Cameroon’s diverse context.			ii) Regular gender- and conflict-sensitive assessments and analyses will be carried out to inform context analysis	Country office programme, monitoring and evaluation, VAM and gender units	December 2021 (and subsequently twice a year)

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<p>3.2 Elaborate a robust theory of change for the next CSP, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) strengthen the results-based management approach by outlining causal pathways in priority areas; ii) clarify and contextualize assumptions underpinning WFP contributions to expected outcomes; and iii) explicitly identify internal and external synergies of WFP programming. 	Country office (regional bureau, RAM, OSN, EME and the Direct Implementation Programme Service)	Agreed	i) With support from the regional bureau, these three sub-recommendations will be implemented as part of the development of a theory of change for the next CSP.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit)	December 2021
<p>3.3 Develop a comprehensive CSP implementation strategy outlining:</p>	Country office (regional bureau, RAM, OSN, EME and the Direct Implementation Programme Service)	Agreed		Country office (regional bureau and targeting hub)	
i) standard operating procedures for targeting, including prioritization criteria and key steps;			i) Implementation strategies for each CSP activity will be reinforced with standard operating procedures for major steps such as targeting, and interlinkages among activities will be highlighted.		December 2020
ii) implementation plans by activity, explicitly clarifying interlinkages; and			ii) Contingency plans for general food distribution and FFA activities will be elaborated with partners, including UNHCR, at the local level.		December 2020

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iii) explicit contingency planning procedures for protecting strategic investments from the redirection of resources to emergency needs.					
Recommendation 4: Strengthen human capacity to implement ongoing priorities and prepare for the next CSP. (2021)	Country office (regional bureau and Human Resources Division)	Agreed			
4.1 Increase support for the country office in programming capacity for operational effectiveness.	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed	i) The country office is recruiting staff for critical positions in the programme unit with a view to reinforcing its teams at the central and field office levels that support operations. Learning and development plans will be developed for all units.	Country office human resources unit and heads of other units	December 2021
4.2 Accelerate recruitment in priority areas.	Country office	Agreed	i) The country office will ensure the participation of key units in the recruitment process.	Country office human resources unit and heads of other units	December 2020
			ii) The country office has increased the number of staff members in the South West and North West field offices in Bamenda and Buea, including by recruiting for additional positions in logistics to support operations and reinforce capacity strengthening for partners. Staffing needs in the North West and South West regions will be reassessed periodically with a view to ensuring that WFP maintains capacity to continue effective	Country office human resources unit and heads of other units	December 2021

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			implementation of the CSP while providing operations and logistics services to partners.		
4.3 Strengthen the human resources unit to implement human resource policy systematically.	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed	i) Staff for additional positions have been recruited and the country office will request the regional bureau's assistance in implementation of the human resources policy and specifically in improving gender parity in the office.	Country office human resources unit	Ongoing
4.4 Adjust the organigram to align it with the upcoming CSP for better internal communication, coordination and integrated programming.	Country office	Agreed	i) The country office organigram is updated once a quarter in line with operational needs and available resources.	Country office human resources unit	Ongoing
Recommendation 5: Improve emergency preparedness, supply chain and programme effectiveness and efficiency. (2021)	Country office (regional bureau, EME, Supply Chain Operations Division (Logistics and Field Support Unit and cash-based transfer team))	Agreed			
5.1 Enhance WFP emergency preparedness mechanisms to enable appropriate Level 2 response through stronger contingency planning, emergency logistics capacity and capacity to support cooperating partners. (2020)	Country office programme and supply chain units	Agreed	i) As part of contingency planning, the country office and field offices are involved in inter-agency support and coordination, implementation of the inter-agency contingency plan for refugees and liaison with national and local institutions. The aims of this work are to better establish better programme objectives and approaches, prepare scenarios and reinforce emergency response.	Country office programme, VAM and supply chain units	Ongoing

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			In accordance with the inter-agency strategy, two rapid response mechanisms are being implemented as part of the Level 2 emergency response in the North West and South West regions and in the Far North region. Each mechanism is led by a technical coordinator and comprises an early warning system and a strong preparedness and response mechanism. Their aim is to provide assistance to newly displaced populations and recently returned households in both regions.		
			ii) As part of WFP's emergency preparedness mechanism, all units in the country and field offices are regularly reminded of the need to update the online minimum preparedness action tracker for their respective areas.		
			iii) A logistics working group has been activated to provide a more holistic view of the demand and requirements for logistics. The group facilitates the gathering and sharing of information on the logistics-related market constraints facing humanitarian stakeholders engaged in Level 2 operations in the country. It is made up of all the logistics actors in the country and its aims include preventing overlaps in and duplication of efforts and sharing lessons learned and best practices.	Country office, all units	

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			iv) The country office has increased the number of staff members in the South West and North West field offices and will periodically reassess its human resource needs to ensure better support for cooperating partners' interventions, liaison with local authorities and wider acceptance of WFP in both regions.	Country office management and programme, supply chain and human resources units	
			v) To improve cooperating partners' capacity and ensure accountability for emergency response, a six-month training plan is being developed at the field office level with support from the country office. The plan will be implemented with all relevant units. All cooperating partners operating in the Level 2 emergency response are receiving induction training.	Country office programme unit	March 2021
5.2 Strengthen food pipeline management for accurate food allocation by attracting more attention to and dedicated resources for: i) enforcement of commodity needs forecasts; and	Country office budget and programming and supply chain units	Agreed	i) WFP will ensure accurate planning through revisions of the implementation plan.	Country office budget planning and supply chain units	June 2021
ii) call-forward procedures put in place through the Supply Chain Working Group.			ii) Standard operating procedures for call-forward procedures will be elaborated and reviewed in consultation with the Supply Chain Working Group.	Country office budget planning and supply chain units	June 2021

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<p>5.3 Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ongoing operational partnerships, by:</p> <p>i) limiting the number of cooperating partners and reviewing their capacity to adopt multisectoral approaches and their cross-cutting theme expertise; and</p>	Country office programme and supply chain units	Agreed	<p>i) During the partnership review process in 2020, the number of cooperating partners was significantly reduced. Based on their capacities, some cooperating partners have since signed field-level agreements for several activities in several regions.</p> <p>The country office has strengthened cost analysis for field-level agreements and continual efforts are made to optimize the field-level agreement system to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of projects.</p>	Country office programme unit	December 2021
<p>ii) optimizing the implementation of the field-level agreement system to minimize discontinuity between contracts.</p>			<p>ii) WFP has started to progressively take over the management of secondary transportation in the North West and South West regions when security conditions allow partners to free up capacity for carrying out food distribution tasks. As part of this management, WFP will implement a process that ensures extensive screening of, and training and capacity building for, local transporters before they undertake secondary transportation for WFP.</p>	Country office supply chain unit	
<p>5.4 Finalize the comparative efficiency analysis to complement the ex-ante effectiveness analysis to inform modalities selection appropriate to contexts.</p>	Country office programme and supply chain units	Agreed, subject to availability of funds.	<p>i) A comparative efficiency analysis for better informing the selection of context-appropriate modalities is being discussed at the country office and will be launched if funds are available. With support from the targeting hub, a cash-based transfer cost-efficiency analysis will be carried out for the East and Far North regions.</p>	Country office programme and supply chain units	December 2021

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Recommendation 6: Strengthen monitoring and evaluation, knowledge-sharing and communication about results. (2021)	Country office (regional bureau, RAM, Corporate Planning and Performance Division (CPP) and CAM)	Agreed			
6.1 Improve the effectiveness and timeliness of process and results measurement by:		Agreed. While COVID-19 has affected monitoring abilities, the country office monitoring and evaluation unit is in regular contact with the regional bureau and field offices with the aim of improving the measurement of key indicators and monitoring WFP's impact in a timely manner to inform decision making.			

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i) designing SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound) monitoring indicators for CSP outputs and outcomes; and			i) Data collection tools will be improved through capacity building from the regional bureau.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit	December 2020
ii) measuring consistent and coherent values for intermediate and final targets.			ii) Data analysis skills will be improved through capacity building from the regional bureau.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit	December 2020
6.2 Invest in monitoring and evaluation capacity to assess the cost-efficiency and cost effectiveness of WFP support for Cameroon.		Agreed Additional staff members for the monitoring and evaluation unit at the country and field office levels are being recruited and will enable timely monitoring and reporting.	i) The induction programme for newly recruited monitoring and evaluation and complaint and feedback mechanism officers will be implemented in September 2020, and support will be provided for monitoring and evaluation recruitment in field offices.	Country office monitoring and evaluation and human resource units	December 2021

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<p>6.3 Enhance the communication of programme evidence and lessons learned, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) ensuring the timely publication of survey and assessment reports; ii) setting up learning mechanisms to generate positive stories based on experience; and iii) facilitating regular exchanges among suboffices to enable learning and the proactive sharing of experiences. 		Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The monitoring and evaluation and VAM units are developing tools for the near-real-time analysis of survey results (including via Tableau dashboards). Preliminary results will be systematically shared with management, before the full assessments are validated and published. <p>An academic partnership has been established with the Sub-Regional Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics and two students are working as WFP volunteers in the VAM unit with the aim of improving the quality of evidence.</p>	Country office monitoring and evaluation and VAM units	December 2021

Acronyms

CAM	Communications, Advocacy and Marketing Division
CSP	country strategic plan
EME	Emergency Operations Division
FFA	food assistance for assets
NGO	non-governmental organization
OSN	Nutrition Division
RAM	Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping