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## Streamlining Executive Board documentation and processes

### Draft decision\*

The Board takes note of the document entitled "Streamlining Executive Board documentation and processes" (WFP/EB.1/2026/10-B).

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\* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

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## Background

1. In the governance review reports approved by the Board at its 2024 annual and second regular sessions ([WFP/EB.A/2024/12-A/Rev.1](#) and [WFP/EB.2/2024/11-A](#)), several recommendations related to Board documentation and processes were endorsed. This document brings these specific recommendations together and defines their implementation.
2. The recommendations concerned include the following:

**Sub-recommendation 1.4:** include on meeting agendas only mandatory items and reports that require strategic discussion or decision, including by

- a) reducing the categories of items to two categories (for decision and for information);
- b) introducing an optional written correspondence procedure for information items that are raised for discussion;
- c) defining a timeframe for the addition of new items on Board agendas that require documentation; [...]

**Sub-recommendation 2.1:** reinforce the word limits set by the Board in the 2004 information paper "Streamlining Board Documentation", with a request to the Secretariat to produce a revision of the 2004 paper that reflects the latest Board document categories.

**Sub-recommendation 11.1:** Concerning the frequency, purpose, content, format and documentation of informal meetings: [...]

- documentation for informal meetings: a formal deadline for the submission of documentation for informal meetings to be introduced to increase the strategic value of the feedback of the Board, namely two weeks before the meetings on documents to be subsequently submitted to the Board for decision and one week for other meetings on matters that do not require a Board decision.

## Categories of items

3. Following a review of a list of mandatory items as defined in article VI of WFP's General Regulations, and noting that the Board has the power to determine at any point in time which matter should or should not be considered and discussed during a Board session, one of the actions proposed during the governance review process in relation to streamlining Board sessions was to reduce the categories of items (for approval, for consideration and for information) to two categories: items for decision and items for information. These two categories were defined as follows:
  - Items for decision: such decisions could be to approve a proposal, to take note of a report, to adopt a rule, etc. These items should always be supported by background documentation, which should include a draft decision to be considered and approved by the Board during a formal session, which should provide direction and guidance to WFP.
  - Items for information: the purpose of these items is to provide information to the Board on a particular topic, with no need for the Board to provide guidance or direction to WFP.
4. These two new categories were introduced at the 2025 first regular session and have been functioning well since then.

5. In order to facilitate the formulation of draft decisions, it was requested that WFP create a glossary of terms containing the main verbs and phrases used in draft decisions, together with examples of their usage in decisions taken in the past. Such a glossary is available in the annex of this document.

### **Written correspondence procedure for information items**

6. In accordance with current Board practice, information items are not discussed during a Board session unless one or more members request that the item be placed on the timetable of the session and if the President agrees that this would be a good use of Board time. Such requests should be submitted to the President of the Board no later than one week before the start of the relevant Board session in order to allow the Secretariat to prepare accordingly. This mechanism does not apply to "oral updates" submitted for information, which given their nature are tabled by default for discussion during sessions.
7. The governance review suggested the implementation of another option for the items for information category, namely, an optional written correspondence procedure. It is proposed that this optional procedure be implemented as follows:
  - At its first review of the draft agenda for a session, the Bureau indicates to the Board Secretary the information items that should follow a written correspondence procedure. This should typically happen six to eight weeks before the start of a Board session and should not be requested less than four weeks before the session.
  - The Board Secretariat, after coordinating with WFP management, then sets up a virtual consultation mechanism, similar to the one currently in place for consultations on country strategic plans. Members and observers are invited to place their comments on the item directly on the platform during a period of two weeks. WFP management provide their responses to those comments in advance of the Board session.
  - The comments and the responses provided will remain available on the virtual consultation platform, which will be linked from the Board session main page.

### **Timeframe for the addition of new items on Board agendas that require documentation**

8. The governance review noted that no timeframe had been established by the Board for the addition of new items on the agendas of Board sessions. Recognizing that new items that require only an oral update could be added at relatively short notice, the governance review suggested that requests for new items that require the elaboration of a pre-session document be submitted no later than two months before the start of the relevant Board session. This timeframe will allow WFP management sufficient time to prepare the document for circulation to the members in accordance with the established timeline. The requests may emanate from Board members and observers and be channelled through the List convenors and the Bureau or may be submitted by WFP management to the Bureau. The Bureau, in consultation with WFP management, will determine whether such requests can be accommodated.

### **Reinforcing the word limits of documents submitted to the Board**

9. In 2004, the Board endorsed a proposal made by the Secretariat related to the word limits of the documentation submitted to formal Board sessions ([WFP/EB.1/2004/INF/7](#)). These word limits were determined following the practice implemented in other organizations, with a view to containing the volume of documentation to be considered by delegates for Board sessions. Statistical analysis made by the Board Secretariat has shown that over time, such word limits have not been fully respected, which has led to an overload on the Board

Secretariat and on the delegates having to review the documentation. As part of the governance review, it was requested to revise and reinforce the word limits set by the Board in 2004, taking account of the revised Board document categories.

10. On the basis of the above, the following updated word limits by document category were proposed to and endorsed by the governance review (these word limits include the annexes and the footnotes in the document, except where specified):
  - Strategic matters
    - No limit set for the strategic plan and the corporate results framework
  - Annual reports
    - No limit set for the annual performance report
  - Policy issues:
    - New or revised policies: 6,000 words
    - Policy update documents: 4,000 words
  - Financial and budgetary matters:
    - Documents presented for decision: 7,000 words, except for the management plan and the audited annual accounts
    - Documents presented for information: 4,000 words
  - Oversight functions:
    - Strategic or policy evaluation reports: 7,500 words
    - Country strategic plan evaluation reports: 6,500 words
    - Annual reports of oversight functions: 7,000 words, except for the annual evaluation report
    - Other reports from oversight functions: 7,000 words
    - Management responses to evaluation and annual and other oversight functions reports: 2,500 words
  - Operational matters:
    - Country strategic plans: 5,000–6,000 words (excluding annexes and logical framework)
    - CSP budget revisions: 2,500 words
    - Other operational reports: 4,000 words
  - Organizational and administrative matters
    - 4,000 words
11. All documents of more than 4,000 words, except those submitted for information, will include an executive summary, and those submitted for decision must include a draft decision.
12. Waivers to the stipulated word limits may exceptionally be granted by WFP heads of department for specific documents. The Board Secretariat will inform the Bureau when such waivers are granted.
13. The Secretariat proposes that these measures be implemented from the 2026 annual session. The Board Secretariat will report on their implementation as part of its annual statistical report presented to the Bureau.

**Deadline for the submission of documentation for informal meetings**

14. The governance review requested that a formal deadline for the submission of documentation for informal meetings be introduced to increase the strategic value of the input of the Board members and observers. The following deadlines were agreed for document submission:
  - a deadline of two weeks before meetings (mainly informal consultations) on documents to be subsequently submitted to the Board for decision at a formal session
  - a deadline of one week for meetings on matters that do not require a Board decision or a further formal discussion
15. These deadlines will be applied starting with meetings subsequent to the 2026 first regular session. Adherence to these deadlines will be reported by the Board Secretariat in its annual statistical report.

## ANNEX

**Glossary of terms used in decisions of the WFP Executive Board**

Language	Meaning and application	Example
Acknowledge	Synonym <i>take note that</i>	Having considered the proposed Part II of the Revised Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021) the Board <b>acknowledged</b> that annual changes to these targets would be included for Board approval in the management plan and that actual achievements would be reported in the annual performance report.
Adopt	<i>Formally approve or accept</i>	The Board <b>adopted</b> the agenda.
Advise	<i>Recommend</i>	The Board also <b>advised</b> the Secretariat to increase the visibility of WFP's strategies for the Board by publishing a comprehensive repository of strategies on the Executive Board website
Agree to / agree on	<i>Reach agreement on (following negotiation)</i>	The Board also took note of recommendation 6 and <b>agreed that</b> RBA collaboration should be considered as part of the broader United Nations context, in particular the reformed United Nations coordination taking place at country-level and the efficiency initiatives being implemented.
Appoint	<i>Assign a role to</i>	In accordance with rule XII of its rules of procedure, the Board <b>appointed</b> H. E. Mario Arvelo Caamaño (Dominican Republic, List C) as Rapporteur for its 2021 first regular session.
Appreciate	<i>Recognize the worth of</i>	The Board <b>appreciated</b> the continued strong commitment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and WFP to strengthen the partnerships and collaboration focusing on the synergies and complementarities of the RBAs

Language	Meaning and application	Example
Approve	<p><i>Officially agree to or accept as satisfactory</i></p> <p>Applies for documents including the strategic plan, corporate results framework, country strategic plans, financial statements, the management plan, budgets, financial transfers, use of the Immediate Response Account, increase in lending ceilings, summary of work, policies, annual performance report, terms of reference of the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee and the establishment of selection panels, etc.</p>	<p>The Board <b>approved</b> the Ethiopia country strategic plan (2020–2025) (WFP/EB.A/2020/8-A/1) at a total cost to WFP of USD 2,586,549,456.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the 2019 annual financial statements of WFP, together with the report of the External Auditor, pursuant to General Regulations XIV.6 (b);</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> an increase in the ceiling of the Global Commodity Management Facility from USD 500 million to USD 560 million.</p>
Approve the appointment of	<p><i>Officially agree to</i></p> <p>Used to approve a selected candidate, e.g. for the position of Director of Evaluation, Inspector General or member of the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Following the recommendation by the Executive Director, the Board <b>approved the appointment</b> of Ms Patricia Ann Kikuko (Kiko) Harvey (United States of America) as Inspector General and Director of Oversight Office for a term of four years from September 2017 to August 2021.</p>
Ask for	Synonym for <i>request</i>	<p>The Board <b>asked</b> WFP to provide a progress report on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations as part of the update on the development of the new gender policy already included in the Biennial Programme of Work at the 2014 Second Regular Session.</p>
Authorize	<p><i>Give official permission for or approval to</i></p> <p>Used to indicate where the Board delegates authority to the Executive Director for a particular purpose</p>	<p>The Board <b>authorized</b> the Executive Director to adjust the programme support and administrative component of the budget in accordance with a change in the level of the forecasted income for the year, at a rate not to exceed 2 percent of the anticipated change in income.</p>

Language	Meaning and application	Example
Call for	<i>Urge, demand</i>	The Board approved the costed implementation plan for all remaining recommendations from the independent consultant's report as set out in annex I of this document and <b>called for</b> their immediate implementation
Decide that	<i>Come to a resolution on</i>	The Board <b>decided that</b> private sector donors should be classified as non-traditional donors for the purposes of application of WFP General Rule XIII.4 (c), except that no resort to the WFP Fund nor to monetization should be made, thereby ensuring that the principle of full cost recovery is ultimately still achieved by all private sector contributions.
Elect	<i>Choose someone to hold a position by voting</i>	In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Board, the Board <b>elected</b> H.E. Evelyn Anita Stokes-Hayford (Ghana, List A) as President for a one-year term. Mr Robert Sabiiti (Uganda, List A) was elected as Alternate.
Emphasize	<i>Give special importance to</i>	The Board <b>emphasized</b> that it remained committed to formulating and implementing joint working methods unless they were, due to the operational mandate of WFP, its institutional set-up or its Rome-based context (e.g. the Rome-based agency calendar, Rome-based agency collaboration), not applicable or relevant for WFP.
Encourage further action on	<i>Require further action</i>	The Board took note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Sri Lanka (2018–2022) (WFP/EB.2/2022/6-J) and management response (WFP/EB.2/2022/6-J/Add.1) and <b>encouraged</b> further action on the recommendations set out in the report, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

Language	Meaning and application	Example
Endorse	<i>Declare agreement with/ support for</i>	The Board took note of the information and recommendations in the document entitled "Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit relevant to the work of WFP" (WFP/EB.1/2019/10-B) and <b>endorsed</b> the responses to the Joint Inspection Unit's recommendations to the legislative bodies included in the annexes to the document.
Expect that	<i>Require</i>	The Board further noted that the Inspector General had identified significant governance, risk management and control issues and the Board <b>expected</b> WFP to address the issues highlighted in the report.
Express	Used to convey Board sentiment with regard to a particular issue	The Board <b>expressed</b> its appreciation for the comprehensive action plan set forth in document WFP/EB.A/2020/12-A
Grant	<i>Give (a right or power) formally</i>	The Executive Board <b>granted</b> , as a temporary measure for 2017, authority to the Executive Director to make revisions to the Pilot CSPs, subject to existing delegations of authority with respect to emergency operations, with the understanding that any such revisions would be reported promptly to the Executive Board
Having considered...	Denotes official recognition of receipt of background information	<b>Having considered</b> the recommendations of the Secretariat in document WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/1, the Board approved use of the Immediate Response Account for preparedness activities up to a limit of USD 6 million per annum.
Invite WFP to	<i>Suggest</i> Used to encourage WFP to take action	The Board <b>invited</b> WFP to collaborate with the other Rome-based agencies – FAO and IFAD – and with the other specialized agencies of the United Nations system with a view to elaborate common strategies, in particular as part of the effort to break down silos within the United Nations system.

<b>Language</b>	<b>Meaning and application</b>	<b>Example</b>
Look forward to	<i>Request (for future action)</i>	The Board took note of the update of the internal directive on protection from harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination and of related measures taken by WFP and <b>looked forward to</b> receiving regular updates on their implementation.
Note	<i>Officially acknowledge</i>	The Board <b>noted</b> the funding from the General Fund of USD 394,645 during 2019 for the ex-gratia payments and the write off of cash losses and receivables; and <b>noted</b> losses of commodities during 2019 forming part of operating expenses for the same period.
Note with appreciation	<i>Acknowledge (expressing approval)</i>	The Board <b>noted with appreciation</b> the approach of mainstreaming the implementation of activities and the achievement of deliverables related to the comprehensive action plan into normal WFP line management and work plans;
Reaffirm	<i>State again strongly</i>	The Board, <b>reaffirming</b> its commitment to WFP's mandate as reflected in the General Rules and Regulations, approved the "WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021)"
Recall	<i>Refer to previous decision (or document)</i>	The Board <b>recalled</b> paragraph vi of its decision 2017/EB.2/2, whereby it approved interim delegations of authority from 1 January 2018 to 29 February 2020 and decided that delegations of authority would be presented for its approval, following a review of the interim delegations of authority, at its 2020 first regular session;
Recognize	<i>Show official appreciation for</i>	The Board <b>recognized</b> the importance of WFP implementing its Strategic Plan (2017–2021) in collaboration with FAO, IFAD and other UNDS entities to maximize results for achieving the SDGs.
Request the Secretariat to...	<i>Ask for follow-up action</i>	The Board <b>requested</b> the Secretariat: i) to provide it with quarterly oral updates for the duration of the mandate of the Senior Advisor to the Executive Director on Workplace Culture, describing the implementation of and any revisions to the plan

Language	Meaning and application	Example
Stress the need for	Synonym of <i>emphasize</i>	The Board <b>stressed</b> the need for WFP to direct special attention to the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action in its support of the least developed countries and in accordance with its mandate
Support	<i>Give approval of</i>	The Board took note of the annual report and <b>supported</b> all the recommendations of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services for 2019 (WFP/EB.A/2020/4-C).
Take note of	<p><i>Acknowledge receipt of documentation and contents therein</i></p> <p>Used in decisions regarding evaluation reports, comments from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions/FAO Finance Committee, annual reports, Executive Director's opening statements, Joint Inspection Unit reports, updates, implementation plans, oral updates on field visits,</p>	The Board <b>took note of</b> the summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2018-2020) (WFP/EB.2/2020/6-B/Rev.1) and management response (WFP/EB.2/2020/6-B/Add.1)
Welcome	Synonym of <i>appreciate</i>	The Board <b>welcomed</b> the pilot joint country strategies and looked forward to the reporting on these pilots and the preparation of more such strategies