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**Executive Board  
Second Regular Session**

**Rome, 10–13 November 2014**

## **POLICY ISSUES**

### **Agenda item 4**

*For information\**



Distribution: GENERAL  
**WFP/EB.2/2014/4-D**  
16 October 2014  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## **UPDATE ON WFP PEACEBUILDING POLICY**



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## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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

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

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its 2013 Second Regular Session, the Executive Board approved the policy on “WFP’s Role in Peacebuilding in Transition Settings”. This document provides an update on implementation of the policy, focusing on early results in three main areas: conducting risk analysis, using conflict-sensitive programming and engaging with peacebuilding partners. It also identifies lessons learned and charts a way forward for WFP’s engagement in peacebuilding.

Since the policy’s approval, WFP has seen modest but tangible improvements in its work in transition contexts. Risk analyses have led to changes in procurement strategies in Lebanon, and greater resource allocations to preparedness activities in Burundi and other countries. Conflict-sensitive programming has reduced tensions at distributions in Jordan, brought communities together in the Kyrgyz Republic, and contributed to broader national peace plans in Côte d’Ivoire, Somalia and Yemen. Stronger partnerships have been established with the United Nations’ Peacebuilding Support Office, Department of Political Affairs and Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the global level and with governments, non-governmental organizations, United Nations integrated missions and communities at the local level.

Several lessons have emerged from these experiences: the policy gives WFP credibility as a partner and has helped to position it in peacebuilding discussions and programmes; achievements in peacebuilding require investment of human and financial resources; WFP’s impact is greatest when peacebuilding is deliberately incorporated into programmes; the boundaries and principles have offered important guides for country offices’ engagement in peacebuilding; and a systems-oriented approach is necessary for WFP to maximize the benefits of its efforts.

WFP will continue to pursue the main policy directions – bearing in mind the lessons learned – as it seeks to contribute to peacebuilding to help address conflict as a principal underlying cause of hunger.

## INTRODUCTION

1. As conflict is a leading cause of hunger, WFP has a stake in successful transitions to peace. WFP seeks to ensure that its food assistance programmes avoid to do harm and, where possible, contribute to wider efforts to support peace and reconciliation. At its 2013 Second Regular Session, the Board approved the policy on “WFP’s Role in Peacebuilding in Transition Settings”,<sup>1</sup> which established the parameters of WFP’s engagement in peacebuilding. Policy implementation started in late 2013. This update draws on a survey of country offices and regional bureaux to provide an overview of early results, emerging lessons and the way forward.

## EARLY RESULTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE PEACEBUILDING POLICY

2. WFP’s peacebuilding policy has three main elements relevant to work in transition settings: i) conducting risk analysis; ii) using conflict-sensitive programming; and iii) engaging with peacebuilding partners. Examples of early results in these areas are outlined in the following paragraphs.<sup>2</sup>

### Conducting Risk Analysis

3. Conducting food security-related risk analysis is critical to ensuring that WFP understands the context in which it operates, takes measures to avoid doing harm to communities and individuals it seeks to assist, and supports local capacities for peace whenever possible. In the first eight months of policy implementation, WFP has achieved results both within the organization and as part of the United Nations system.

⇒ *WFP-specific risk analyses*

4. WFP’s risk analysis work has taken three forms. First, it is continuing to pilot a risk analysis and conflict-sensitive programming tool that examines whether WFP’s food assistance programmes may inadvertently exacerbate conflict and explores ways to mitigate such unintended consequences. In Lebanon, for example, risk analysis identified the potential for WFP’s e-voucher programme – its largest globally – to create tensions if the selection process for participating shops was not perceived to be transparent and fair; the country office is adjusting the e-voucher programme by reinforcing standards and expanding the pool of applicants. WFP field offices in Lebanon are taking steps in using community consultations to promote greater diversity among participating shops to help prevent sectarian divisions.
5. Second, some country offices have incorporated more in-depth risk analysis into their regular food security monitoring to understand whether and how conflict may increase food needs. In South Sudan, for example, WFP’s food security monitoring system collects information on the impact of local conflict dynamics on household food insecurity. Since 2013, WFP has included secondary analysis of local conflict dynamics in drought-prone parts of the country in its annual needs and livelihoods analysis. The country office uses these analyses to inform conflict-sensitive programmes in different livelihood zones, and preparedness actions such as pre-positioning food.

<sup>1</sup> WFP/EB.2/2013/4-A/Rev.1

<sup>2</sup> Some of the country-led efforts included in this update started before policy approval in November 2013, but illustrate how the policy could influence WFP decision-making in conflict and post-conflict settings.

6. Third, the Analysis and Early Warning Unit at Headquarters has prepared background briefs on country-level risks, which outline natural disasters, conflict and economic hazards in a country and the potential scale of response required. In Burundi and Lebanon, for instance, comprehensive risk analyses resulted in identification of emergency readiness actions for enhancing preparedness and informed decision-making about resource allocations.

⇒ *United Nations-wide risk analyses*

7. WFP has also participated in inter-agency assessments to ensure coherent overall analysis that informs United Nations planning in countries emerging from conflict. For example, WFP has been involved in strategic or technical assessments and risk analyses in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and the Sudan. WFP's involvement in the Central African Republic, for example, is guided by the policy and enables WFP to voice its concerns regarding the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to influence decisions about the integrated United Nations presence and mission priorities.

### **Using Conflict-Sensitive Programming**

8. While maintaining its focus on addressing hunger, WFP can support transitions to peace through one or more of three approaches: i) avoiding to do harm; ii) supporting peacebuilding at the local level; and iii) supporting peacebuilding at the national level.

⇒ *Avoiding to do harm*

9. Programme activities are being adjusted to mitigate unintended negative consequences of food assistance on communities and individuals. For example, in Jordan, where WFP addresses the needs of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, it avoids creating tension between refugees and vulnerable people in the host community by using a transfer modality that stimulates the local economy – food vouchers – and by providing assistance to both groups. It also provides a hotline for beneficiaries to provide feedback or complaints about assistance, enabling the country office to ensure that activities are having the intended effect.

⇒ *Supporting peacebuilding at the local level*

10. The food assistance interventions of some country offices have gone beyond simply avoiding doing harm, by promoting reconciliation at the local level. In the Kyrgyz Republic, for example, some food assistance-for-assets (FFA) projects involve participants from different ethnic groups working together in water user associations, bridge reconstruction and disaster mitigation. These projects do not have specific peacebuilding objectives, but participants report that activities have fostered inter-ethnic cooperation by providing opportunities for people to work together on practical issues and to socialize across ethnic lines, helping to breakdown mistrust and negative stereotypes and promoting cooperation. Conflict resolution is a clear secondary benefit of these efforts.
11. In Côte d'Ivoire, FFA projects, such as reconstructing destroyed homes, are integrated with peace-promoting activities focused on dialogue – led by WFP's non-governmental organization (NGO) partner – for generating trust and enhancing local capacities to prevent and resolve conflict. Other FFA projects, such as rehabilitation of lowlands for rice cultivation and community gardens, are not initiated until participants have reached agreement on the use of land owned by the community or individuals. Conflict management and social cohesion are consciously incorporated into the design of these projects.

⇒ *Supporting peacebuilding at the national level*

12. In some countries, WFP provides food assistance as part of a United Nations-supported national peacebuilding strategy. In Yemen, for example, WFP and other United Nations entities implement a joint programme on sustainable livelihoods and employment generation for people living in conflict-affected communities as one of five initial investments under Yemen's Peacebuilding Priority Plan approved in May 2014. WFP has received part of a two-year Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) grant for this programme.
13. In Somalia, WFP promotes the incorporation of food security and livelihoods into national peacebuilding plans including the three-year New Deal Compact for Somalia (2014–2016), the United Nations Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) and peacebuilding priority plans for PBF funding. WFP engaged in consultations on the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs), which identified the enhancement of livelihoods – including rehabilitation and expansion of agriculture and market value chains – and increased service delivery as priorities for investment under the New Deal. As a member of the ISF Steering Committee, WFP supports efforts to ensure that the PSGs are included in the operational component of the ISF, which defines the United Nations' strategy for supporting peace and stability in Somalia. WFP and other United Nations entities are preparing a PBF proposal for the return, reintegration and peaceful coexistence of displaced Somali populations.
14. In Côte d'Ivoire, in early 2014, the Authority on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration requested WFP to support the reintegration of more than 40,000 ex-combatants. This engagement was in line with WFP's peacebuilding policy, which emphasizes the importance of aligning WFP food assistance with broader national strategies.
15. It is too early to assess the impact of WFP's participation in these three peacebuilding efforts, but they provide examples of how food assistance can contribute to strategies for addressing conflict, which is a principal underlying cause of hunger.

### **Engaging with Peacebuilding Partners**

16. Many of WFP's partners have expertise in supporting peace, reconciliation and conflict resolution in transition settings. WFP aims to strengthen these partnerships and build new ones at the global, national and community levels.

⇒ *Global-level partnerships*

17. To promote a more coherent and effective approach to peacebuilding, WFP engages with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Political Affairs and Peacebuilding Support Office, as well as longer-standing partners such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). WFP, OCHA, UNICEF and other partners have voiced humanitarian concerns on integrated task forces, and WFP's engagement has sometimes enabled it to maintain a principled humanitarian approach in areas still affected by conflict, such as the Central African Republic, Mali and South Sudan.
18. Two WFP staff members participated in the 2014 pilot training of trainers in conflict and strategic assessments and are now part of an inter-agency pool of candidates for representing the humanitarian community in future assessments and serving as trainers on common assessments across the United Nations system. WFP has also sought funding through the PBF, with applications approved or being processed for Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, the Kyrgyz Republic and Yemen.

⇒ *National and community-level partnerships*

19. Prior to the Ebola virus outbreak, WFP developed a new approach in the Guinea forest region that addresses more directly the root causes of conflict related to natural resource management and food insecurity. Based on analysis conducted with NGO partners, WFP has designed FFA activities for improving access to natural resources and markets. Hunger interventions are integrated with conflict-mitigation and reconciliation activities carried out by NGOs. Partnerships with NGOs that are experienced in working with communities on conflict prevention and transformation have facilitated WFP's engagement on these issues. WFP has scaled back activities to focus on the delivery of emergency assistance to Ebola patients and others affected by the outbreak. Nevertheless, investments in conflict mitigation are important for Guinea's recovery.

## EARLY LESSONS LEARNED

20. Although the policy is relatively new, challenges and opportunities have already been identified over the past year.
21. *The policy provides an important foundation for positioning WFP in peacebuilding discussions.* Staff at various levels – the New York office, the Cairo regional bureau and the country offices in Côte d'Ivoire and Yemen – reported that the policy helped position WFP in global and national peace-related processes, enabling staff to understand and articulate its added value in peacebuilding. For example, the policy helped the Yemen country office to explain WFP's contribution to design and implementation of the joint programme under the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, and demonstrate WFP's credibility as a partner with global capacity.
22. *Achievements are possible, but require investments.* The examples discussed in this update suggest that WFP's involvement in peacebuilding processes can have positive impacts on its programmes and its efforts to reduce hunger. However, to achieve these results, WFP needs to dedicate resources to peacebuilding. In Mali, for example, WFP became a more effective partner in United Nations discussions on integration issues when staff were trained on integrated planning, Headquarters provided support, and a standby partner with expertise was temporarily deployed. As mentioned in the policy, these investments are expected to entail incremental rather than substantial increases in costs; it is important that WFP continue to recognize and plan for these expenses and mobilize the necessary funds.
23. *Peacebuilding activities must be a deliberate focus.* In several countries, WFP consciously provides support or food assistance as a way to contribute to local or national peacebuilding efforts. In other countries, its activities generate positive secondary benefits for peace that were not originally intended or planned. An important lesson from these experiences is that WFP can contribute to peace in many ways and to varying degrees. However, WFP maximizes its impact when peacebuilding is specifically incorporated into programme design, implementation and monitoring. Peacebuilding programmes are more than hunger interventions in conflict and post-conflict settings. They require that WFP's programmes be tailored to reflect opportunities for addressing conflict in the specific context.
24. *Boundaries and guiding principles are essential.* As well as outlining WFP's role in peacebuilding contexts, the policy also identifies the boundaries to WFP's engagement, and principles for guiding the organization's actions. These boundaries and principles are important considerations for country offices. For example, in the Central African Republic and Mali, WFP decided not to support early disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

efforts in order to retain communities' acceptance for deliveries of life-saving WFP assistance. In both countries, the decision was informed by risk analysis and the need to preserve perceptions of WFP's neutrality.

25. In other settings, such as South Sudan, WFP has followed the principle of being responsive to a dynamic environment by reorienting its strategy to provide life-saving food and nutrition support in conflict areas. WFP tailors its strategies to changing conditions, providing emergency food relief for communities and individuals in conflict zones and gradually scaling up recovery and resilience-building activities in more stable locations as the security situation improves.
26. *WFP requires a systems-oriented approach to enhancing its engagement in peacebuilding.* WFP's peacebuilding efforts are most effective when they are coordinated vertically and horizontally. WFP's influence on United Nations integration arrangements in the Central African Republic and Mali relied on timely and consistent vertical communications among the country office, the regional bureau and Headquarters, with liaison and other support from the New York office. Positions established with partners at the local, national and global levels were passed up and down to other levels. Country offices have also asked for a means for sharing lessons and experiences with each other horizontally. Moreover, the new integrated context analysis tool – which uses maps with different overlays to identify locations where recurring food insecurity, natural shocks and other aggravating factors, including conflict, converge – can be combined with risk analysis and conflict-sensitive programme tools to develop more effective programmes that contribute to peace and social cohesion. WFP needs to reinforce these vertical and horizontal systems.

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## WAY FORWARD

27. Based on these results and lessons, WFP will pursue the following approach in coming years as it accumulates more experience:
  - *Continue to implement the policy.* The policy appears to provide a balanced framework for WFP's engagement in peacebuilding, but there is need for more training and guidance on designing, managing and monitoring peacebuilding programmes and on topics such as United Nations integration and PBF applications. These activities should be tailored to WFP's needs while complementing United Nations-wide training and guidance. An implementation plan, including monitoring of progress, is being rolled out.
  - *Respond to emerging issues and lesson learned.* Lessons learned will be incorporated into WFP's approach to peacebuilding and the policy implementation plan. WFP will identify ways to make the incremental investments in expertise and capacity needed to support full implementation of the policy, adhere to the boundaries and principles in the policy and apply a more systems-oriented approach, while continuing to gather lessons and make necessary adjustments.
28. Through this approach, WFP will enhance its ability to reduce hunger by engaging in a limited but meaningful way in efforts to transition towards peace.



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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

FFA	food assistance for assets
ISF	United Nations Integrated Strategic Framework
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PSG	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund