EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 5

For consideration

SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT OF THE WFP GENDER POLICY (2008–2013)

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

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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Should you have any questions regarding availability of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation assesses the quality, implementation and results of WFP's 2009 policy "Promoting Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Addressing Food and Nutrition Challenges", and the associated corporate action plan. It is intended to support both accountability and learning given the growing importance of accountability for gender considerations within the United Nations system, and recent changes to WFP's institutional structures and systems for addressing gender issues.

The evaluation found that the policy had quality limitations from the outset. It combined a strategic shift for WFP with a pragmatic approach to implementing the policy. Gaps in content, the absence of critical foundations, and its project-based approach undermined its scope as an instrument for driving reform.

The policy has not resulted in a shared or collective vision of "gender" in WFP, nor has it significantly influenced WFP's capacity to mainstream gender issues. Its implementation was challenged by limited corporate recognition, commitment and resources. The fragmented institutional response fell short of the comprehensive gender-focused activity required to meet the policy's intentions.

There is evidence of a growing body of gender-focused work and gender-sensitive programming at the country level. This is producing potentially valuable results by increasing equitable access to food allocations and decision-making on food distributions, and supporting women's gains in participation and empowerment. However, these shifts are driven from the bottom up and are not guided by a common central vision, framework or learning from the policy.

Both internal and external factors influenced policy effectiveness. Rather than the policy itself, external factors such as the reporting system of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan, introduction of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender marker, and conducive national environments were the primary drivers of WFP's efforts to address gender issues. Constraining factors were mainly internal, and relate to limitations in the policy's quality and implementation arrangements.

Despite these challenges, there is evidence of a significant increase in momentum and commitment at the corporate level from 2012 onwards. However, a shift in gear – such as that promised by the reinvigorated leadership, accountability reforms and strengthened profile for gender issues – is needed if WFP is to realize its mission and mandate equitably and respond to its international commitments.

The report's four recommendations seek to support this process. They call for a clearer position and a more comprehensive approach to gender issues within WFP policies, strategies and operations.

DRAFT DECISION*
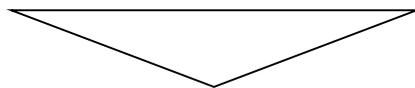
The Board takes note of "Summary Evaluation Report of the WFP Gender Policy (2008–2013)" (WFP/EB.1/2014/5-A*) and the management response in WFP/EB.1/2014/5-A/Add.1 and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

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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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*We commit ourselves to providing strong leadership within our organizations
to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all our organizational practices,
policies and programmes.[1]*

*WFP's mission can only be achieved if women, men, girls and boys are equal in terms of
opportunities, access to resources and services and participation in decisions.[2]*

INTRODUCTION

1.   The importance of gender issues in the reduction of food insecurity has been reiterated in many recent publications and policy statements. For WFP, gender equality lies at the heart of its mission. WFP's mandate to reduce hunger and support poverty reduction is shaped by the gendered needs of the men and women, boys and girls it serves.

Evaluation Features

2.   This evaluation of WFP's 2009 gender policy "Promoting Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Addressing Food and Nutrition Challenges" is intended to support both accountability and learning, particularly as WFP's Executive Director recently reiterated the importance of gender considerations as an institutional priority within the wider organizational change process. The evaluation's questions were:

   ➢   What is the quality of the policy and to what extent was it geared towards attaining the best results from the outset?

   ➢   What results can plausibly be associated with the policy and mechanisms to implement it?

   ➢   Why and how has the policy produced the results observed?

3.   The evaluation was conducted between May and October 2013. Data were collected from many sources and parts of WFP, including more than 60 country offices spanning emergency to development contexts. The evidence base was constructed from the building blocks summarized in Box 1.

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[1] United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, CEB/2006/2.

[2] "WFP Gender Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2009/5-A/Rev.1).

Box 1. Evidence Base

- Review of institutional structures and processes for gender mainstreaming.

- Review of policy areas and business processes.

- Field study in five countries: Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia; and Jordan and Lebanon, focussing on the Syrian regional emergency operation.

- Desk review of portfolios, and interviews, in four countries – Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Ghana and Malawi – and specific operations in 12 additional countries.[3]

- Telephone interviews with 16 additional country offices.[4]

- A survey of remaining country offices and regional bureaux; responses were received from 29 –74 percent – of the 39 country offices contacted, but only two regional bureaux.

- Benchmarking of WFP's policy and institutional structures with comparator organizations selected for their similarity to WFP's business model, significant field presence and engagement in humanitarian and development work: CARE-USA, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Oxfam-GB and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

- Interviews with partners, including donors, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies.

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4.   Limitations included the lack of an intervention logic or theory of change underlying the policy; weak information on results; and limited historical memory resulting from the major institutional changes since the policy was developed.

5.   To guide the assessment, the evaluation team therefore developed a framework as summarized in Figure 1. It sets out the results at different levels to which WFP might reasonably be expected to contribute by implementing the policy's reforms and commitments.

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[3] The Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritania, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

[4] Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Kenya, Indonesia, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Liberia, Namibia, Nepal, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania.
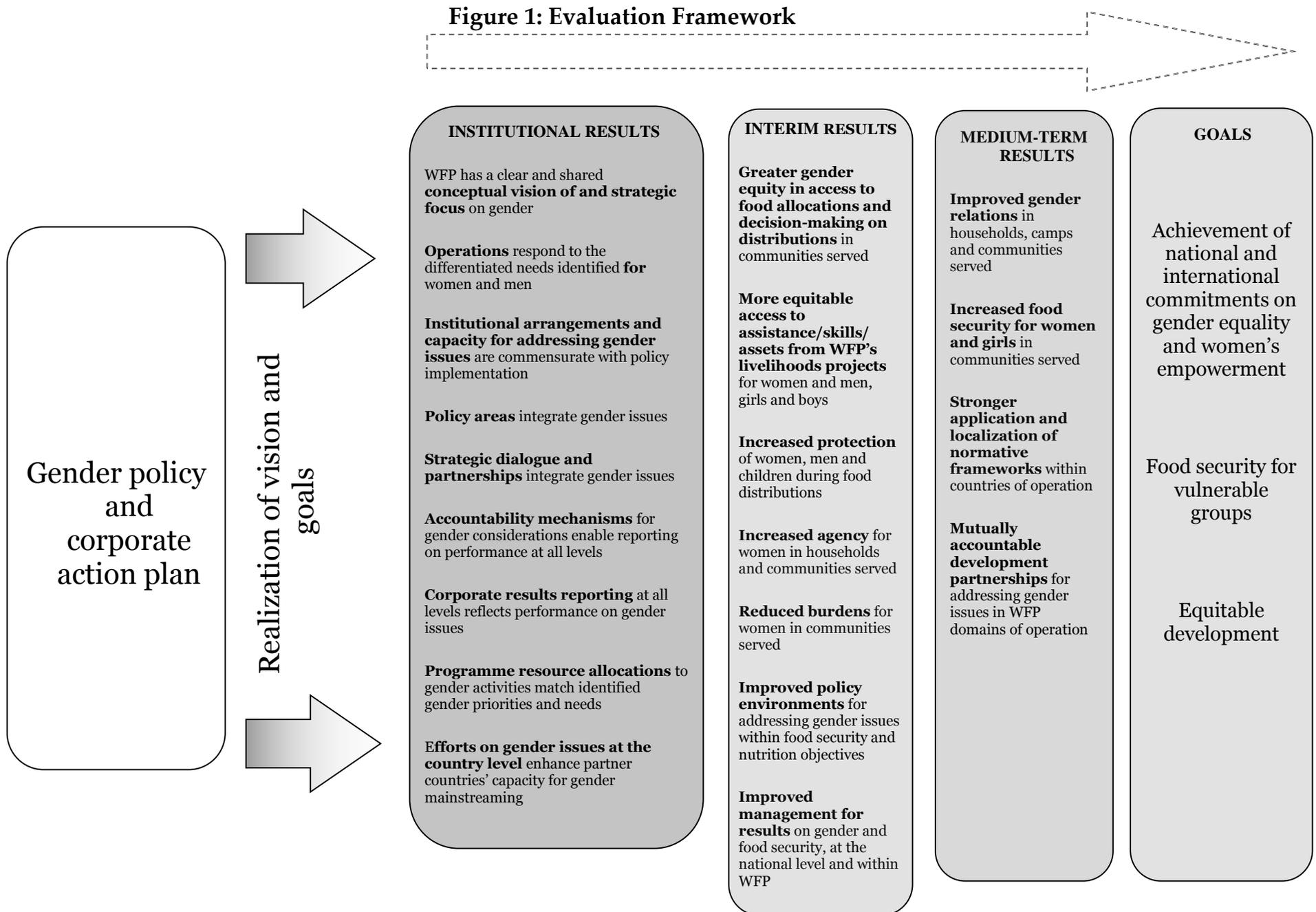
Figure 1: Evaluation Framework

Gender policy and corporate action plan

Realization of vision and goals

INSTITUTIONAL RESULTS

WFP has a clear and shared **conceptual vision of and strategic focus** on gender

Operations respond to the differentiated needs identified **for** women and men

Institutional arrangements and capacity for addressing gender issues are commensurate with policy implementation

Policy areas integrate gender issues

Strategic dialogue and partnerships integrate gender issues

Accountability mechanisms for gender considerations enable reporting on performance at all levels

Corporate results reporting at all levels reflects performance on gender issues

Programme resource allocations to gender activities match identified gender priorities and needs

E**fforts on gender issues at the country level** enhance partner countries' capacity for gender mainstreaming

INTERIM RESULTS

Greater gender equity in access to food allocations and decision-making on distributions in communities served

More equitable access to assistance/skills/ assets from WFP's livelihoods projects for women and men, girls and boys

Increased protection of women, men and children during food distributions

Increased agency for women in households and communities served

Reduced burdens for women in communities served

Improved policy environments for addressing gender issues within food security and nutrition objectives

Improved management for results on gender and food security, at the national level and within WFP

MEDIUM-TERM RESULTS

Improved gender relations in households, camps and communities served

Increased food security for women and girls in communities served

Stronger application and localization of normative frameworks within countries of operation

Mutually accountable development partnerships for addressing gender issues in WFP domains of operation

GOALS

Achievement of national and international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment

Food security for vulnerable groups

Equitable development

CONTEXT

International Environment

6.   Within the United Nations system, attention to gender issues is growing. International standards, norms, agreements and goals position gender equality as a development objective in itself and a powerful lever for achieving other development outcomes.

7.   The 2006 United Nations System-Wide Policy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was followed by the 2012 United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) for Gender Equality. WFP's first self-assessment of SWAP implementation (February 2013) reported significant room for improvement, meeting requirements on just four of the 15 indicators.

8.   The post-2015 development agenda is expected to reinforce the primacy of gender equality as a global objective. A specific goal and targets for ensuring food security and good nutrition have been proposed, which would place WFP's efforts to address gender issues under increased scrutiny.

Internal Environment

9.   The 2009 gender policy followed two predecessors: the 2003–2007 Enhanced Commitments to Women, and the 1996–2002 Commitments to Women. Evaluations found that while both policies had raised the profile of gender issues within WFP – helping to develop the strong reputation WFP enjoyed during the period – shortcomings in institutional arrangements and capacities for addressing gender concerns persisted.

10.   The 2009 policy and its associated corporate action plan were developed and implemented in a period of significant organizational change. The policy was one of the first produced under the 2008–2013 Strategic Plan, responding to the shift from food aid to food assistance.

11.   Following the appointment of the current Executive Director in 2012, WFP's institutional structures and systems for addressing gender issues have changed. The former Gender Service is now the higher-profile and better-resourced Gender Office (OMG), located directly under the Deputy Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer.

12.   While the evaluation was being conducted, the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan was approved and a related Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and Management Results Framework (MRF) were under preparation. A business process review was also under way.
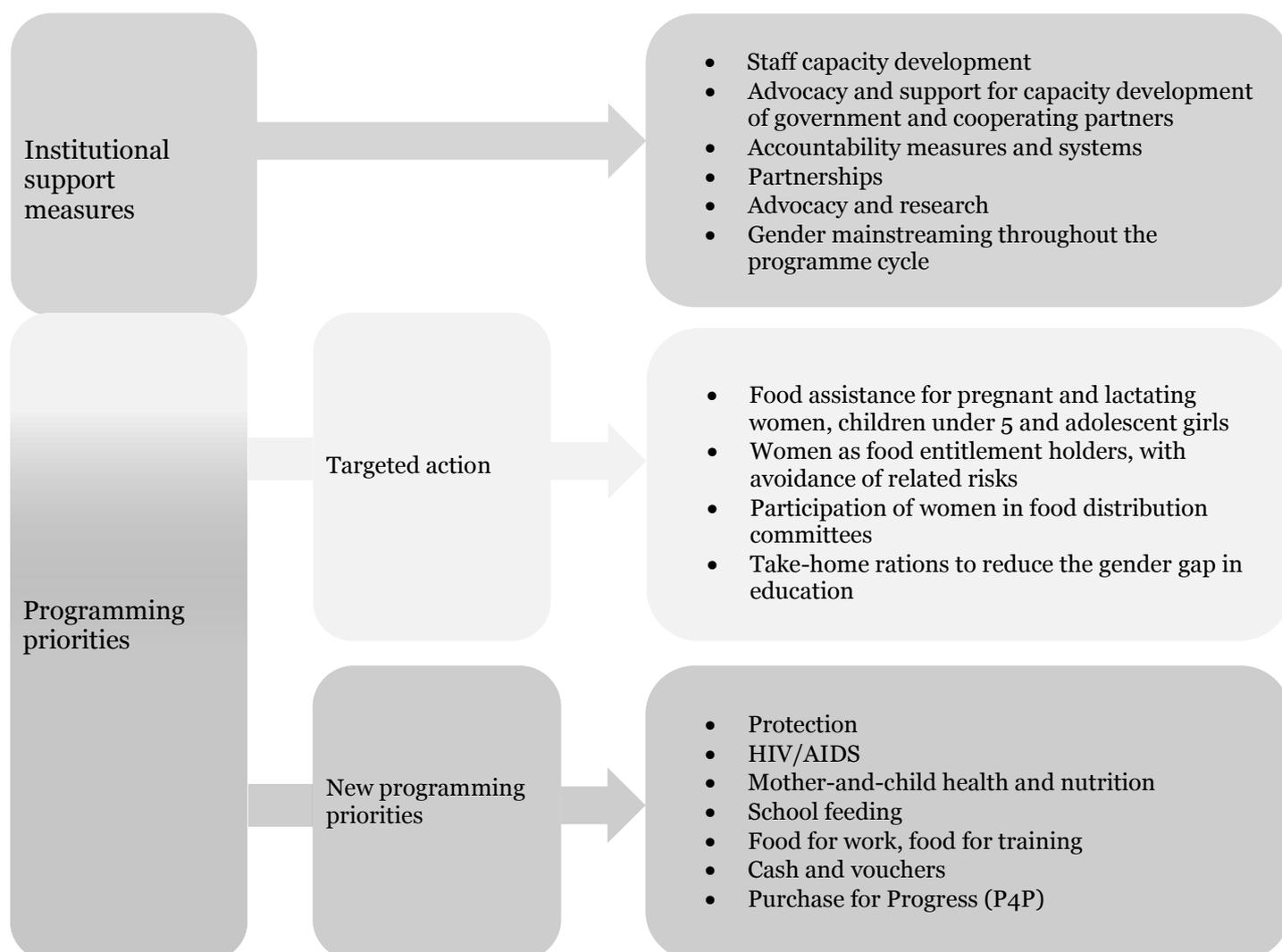
FINDINGS

Policy Quality

13.   The evaluation of the 2003–2007 gender policy recommended systemic change to enable WFP to meet its commitments on gender, including by enhancing resources and skills for gender mainstreaming and providing technical, human and financial support to country offices. The 2009 gender policy and 2010 corporate action plan were expected to provide the strategic vision, and the operational and practical tools for implementation.

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14.   Three critical dimensions underlay the policy:

> ➤ a pragmatic approach, recognizing that some of the building blocks for a comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming were not yet in place;

> ➤ a strategic shift from the "women-centred" approach of its predecessor to a gender approach that recognized the differences in lives of women and men and emphasized men's roles in change, and the importance of gender relations; and

> ➤ a combination of targeted actions for women, geared to continuing the strong legacy of the Enhanced Commitments to Women, and a mainstreaming approach, in line with international thinking at the time.

15.   While some substantive analysis underpinned policy development, this analysis was not comprehensive. The policy did not set out a clear rationale, grounded in evidence, for its approach. The conceptual shift towards a gender- rather than a women-focused model was not accompanied by associated analysis.

16.   The policy vision[5] focused on the institutional dimension of developing an enabling environment for WFP as a step towards the achievement of gender equality results. It lacked a clear statement of "why gender", related to WFP's mandate, and of how to gear institutional reform to intended humanitarian and development results – changes in the conditions and lives of the people whose interests, needs and priorities WFP serves – and intended contributions to broader United Nations goals.

17.   The policy's objectives were broad, and the absence of a theory of change limited common understanding of what results were intended, why and how they would be achieved, and what assumptions were embedded in the policy's logic. Targets were unambitious and separate from regular planning, monitoring and accountability arrangements.

18.   The policy's strategies for supporting implementation and the achievement of results (see Figure 2) reflected a dual approach of institutional support measures and programming priorities. They included targeted actions for women and embedding a gender "lens" into programme areas.

19.   The policy's connections to gender strategies were limited, and it is unclear how the strategies were intended to achieve the policy's objectives. Critically, strategies for addressing gender issues in emergency response and disaster preparedness – WFP's core business areas – were lacking.

20.   In its quest to be realistic, the policy adopted a series of project-based initiatives to generate change: a Gender Innovations Fund (GIF), to support programming; conversion of the Gender Focal Point Network into a Gender Advocate Network; and "gender-friendly" country offices. However, these did not constitute the set of systemic reforms recommended by the 2008 evaluation.

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[5] "To create an enabling environment in WFP for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women reflected in policies, programmes and actions that support partner countries in addressing food and nutrition challenges."

Figure 2: Policy Strategies

Institutional support measures		• Staff capacity development • Advocacy and support for capacity development of government and cooperating partners • Accountability measures and systems • Partnerships • Advocacy and research • Gender mainstreaming throughout the programme cycle
Programming priorities	Targeted action	• Food assistance for pregnant and lactating women, children under 5 and adolescent girls • Women as food entitlement holders, with avoidance of related risks • Participation of women in food distribution committees • Take-home rations to reduce the gender gap in education
	New programming priorities	• Protection • HIV/AIDS • Mother-and-child health and nutrition • School feeding • Food for work, food for training • Cash and vouchers • Purchase for Progress (P4P)

21.   While responsibilities and accountabilities were intended to be WFP-wide, no guidance for implementation, or support in interpreting the policy within programming, policy or business areas were available. Staff were unaware of responsibilities, and had no incentives or accountability for individual or unit targets.

22.   The policy thus lacked several critical foundations, limiting its relevance and capacity to drive change from the start.

Box 2. Benchmark Comparison

Comparison reveals that WFP's policy coheres with those of the four comparator institutions in:

- adopting a gender-focused rather than a women-focused approach and promoting gender mainstreaming;

- having a separate action plan, or equivalent, for implementation – although FAO's more recent (2012) policy sets minimum standards and actions to be taken within wider programme and country strategies and plans; and

- lacking a theory of change – although all the comparator policies are more explicit on their gender equality goal and objectives

WFP does not cohere with other policies/institutions in:

- integrating gender considerations into Strategic Plans and SRFs, which all other policies do more clearly, even compared with WFP's new Strategic Plan; and

- setting out a clear accountability framework and minimum standards for programming, and the institutional mechanisms and processes for applying them.

Policy Results

23.   The evaluation assessed the results that the policy either set out or could reasonably be expected to deliver, as shown in the logic model in Figure 1. It divided these into institutional results and humanitarian or development (interim and medium-term) results.

⇒ *Institutional results*

24.   The policy did not generate a clear and shared understanding of what gender means for WFP, nor of why gender issues matter for the realization of WFP's mandate. Such an understanding is essential for the policy to gain traction. Gender was most commonly understood to mean "targeting women", communication and dissemination efforts had relatively little impact, and staff did not perceive the policy as an institutional "signature" document. The policy was not translated into operational guidance to support practical action on the ground.

25.   However, country offices are developing their own interpretations and models. There is evidence of gender considerations being embedded in country strategies or programmes, to varying degrees, in six of the eight country portfolios reviewed, with indication of a progressive, empowerment-focused approach in, for example, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

26.   The institutional reforms carried out for policy implementation reflect the partial corporate commitment. Leadership and senior management support for the policy launch was limited, when organizational buy-in was most needed:

➢ The Gender Service's human resourcing was inadequate, relying heavily on consultants rather than core staff, and suffering lack of continuity and high turnover. The service faced excessive demands for its available resources, and financial resourcing was insufficient; of the USD 7 million requested, only USD 5.1 million (71 percent) was received, in a piecemeal and unpredictable fashion.

➢ The Gender Advocate Network now has more than 130 members from country offices, regional bureaux and Headquarters. Appointments were largely based on interest rather than experience or capability. Training, work plans, budgets and time allocations were lacking, and the gender advocate role focused on information-sharing rather than directive action. Information flows were mainly from the centre.

> ➢ There was very little staff training or capacity development – only 29 percent of the relevant corporate action plan funding requirements had been received by the end of 2012. WFP has not yet conducted the entity-wide assessment of staff capacity for addressing gender issues required by the SWAP. An ongoing initiative for rolling out the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Marker has trained more than 150 staff members, but the evaluation found a need for stronger Gender Marker validation, benchmarking and training in application.

> ➢ Although not covered by the policy, the gender balance in WFP staffing mirrors WFP's commitment to gender equality. Gender parity statistics have moved little, despite corporate commitment. Inadequate action has been taken to diagnose and address particular blockages.

Comparator example. FAO has invested in strengthening its gender focal point system with most focal points at P4 level and above; responsibilities specified in job descriptions; and at least 20 percent of focal points' working time committed to gender issues. There are gender specialists at FAO Headquarters, and five are being hired regionally.

27. Accountability for and corporate reporting on gender issues were limited until 2012, but are now being enhanced. A draft Gender Mainstreaming Accountability Framework (GMAF) geared to the SWAP has been developed, and WFP has adopted the IASC Gender Marker to assess all project documents for gender sensitivity, although more training and systematic benchmarking and analysis are required (see paragraph 26, third bullet).

28. Gender considerations are integrated into the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan and SRF , but there are technical limitations to the intended results and indicators in their current form; for example, use of the same two indicators and targets to measure changes in all four Strategic Objectives risks limiting accountability for and reporting of gender results. Until recently, gender issues did not feature in management and staff Performance and Competency Enhancement (PACE) processes.

29. The limited embedding of gender considerations in accountability mechanisms until recently resulted in weak corporate reporting on gender issues. Annual performance reports reflect little attention to gender beyond data disaggregation. At the country level, the continued application in standard project reports of only the three quantitative indicators from the Enhanced Commitments to Women until 2012 constrained reporting on gender concerns and perpetuated the understanding that gender equates to targeting women.

30. Financial budgeting and tracking systems do not require or allow the tracking of budget allocations to addressing gender issues. Gender concerns are not embedded in audit systems and are therefore not perceived as a risk at the country level. Gender issues are not systematically integrated into evaluations, although there is evidence of improvement.

31. Gender in policies and programmes. The evaluation found gender considerations reflected in all WFP's thematic policy documents, although the depth and approach varied. The 2011 disaster risk reduction and management policy and the 2012 humanitarian protection policy emphasize gender issues more consistently and prominently.[6]

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[6] "WFP Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management" (WFP/EB.2/2011/4-A) and "WFP Humanitarian Protection Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2012/5-B/Rev.1).

32. WFP's project cycle management process has integrated gender considerations only shallowly. The use of gender analysis has been patchy; showing in only 5 of the 20 portfolios/operations analysed, although strong examples exist, including in Malawi.

33. Regarding gender-sensitive programming, there is:

➢ strong evidence of increased inclusion of women and girls, but resulting mainly from a vulnerability rather than a gender lens;

➢ some evidence of progress on identifying gender-based needs and priorities in certain programme areas, including school feeding, nutrition, protection and livelihoods, although these cases are commonly not linked to the policy; and

➢ very strong evidence of a gender – rather than a women-focused – approach in food for training/work/assets, protection and P4P initiatives.

The P4P initiative has a global gender strategy with a clear vision, objectives and intended results; requires a country gender assessment, for which guidance is provided; and embeds gender issues in its results and reporting frameworks. These features have resulted in gender analysis, gender-sensitive designs and reports on gender issues at the country level.

34. The evaluation encountered gaps in the treatment of gender issues, arising from the lack of an integrated approach in country offices. These gaps sometimes risked compromising the principles of the *"Do No Harm"* approach. In Za'atri Camp, Jordan, protection of women was interpreted as a proxy for addressing gender concerns, although boys were missing school to attend food distributions and risked attack for doing so. In Ethiopia, women incurred health risks by working long into pregnancy on food-for-work initiatives in the Productive Safety Net Programme, because officials and the women themselves had insufficient understanding of procedures.

35. As one of the policy's key mainstreaming instruments, the GIF had approved 42 projects by August 2013, totalling USD 2.9 million, but faced considerable unmet funding demand. While the GIF provided some valuable individual initiatives, projects were mostly small in scale and output-focused; incurred significant transaction costs; were implemented separately from WFP's core country operations; and lacked sound sustainability strategies.

36. In partnerships and capacity development, WFP's approach was mainly passive, although its responses were positive when it was encouraged to take action. At the national level, WFP made only limited efforts to raise gender concerns with partners or to conduct training on gender mainstreaming; however, in Bangladesh and Lesotho, for example, such training was stimulated by GIF initiatives. In-country resources such as GenCap advisers were not fully utilized.

37. WFP was not proactive in raising gender issues centrally with its donors or international NGO partners. Gender considerations were embedded in some field-level agreements but were not tracked.

38. Collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies was relatively strong at Headquarters, particularly in peer reviewing the SWAP. WFP participated in the development of a joint United Nations programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women, with the International Fund for Agricultural Development, FAO and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, but this programme remains unfunded. A three-year research programme with the Institute of Development Studies on innovations from the field seeks to identify lessons learned from gender-equitable food security programmes and is generating considerable interest.

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⇒ *Humanitarian and Development Results*

39.   Overall, the evidence base for these results was limited, and under-reporting is possible. Where cited, numbers are of the 20 portfolios or operations reviewed across WFP's diverse operating contexts. These contexts range from humanitarian- to development-oriented, which are more conducive to transformative changes in gender relations.

40.   *Interim results.* The evaluation mapped interim gender results along a horizontal programming continuum from food aid to food assistance, and a vertical ladder progressing from inclusion of women, through women's participation and empowerment and/or the transformation of gender relationships, to changes in the national policy context.

Figure 3: Interim Humanitarian and Development Results
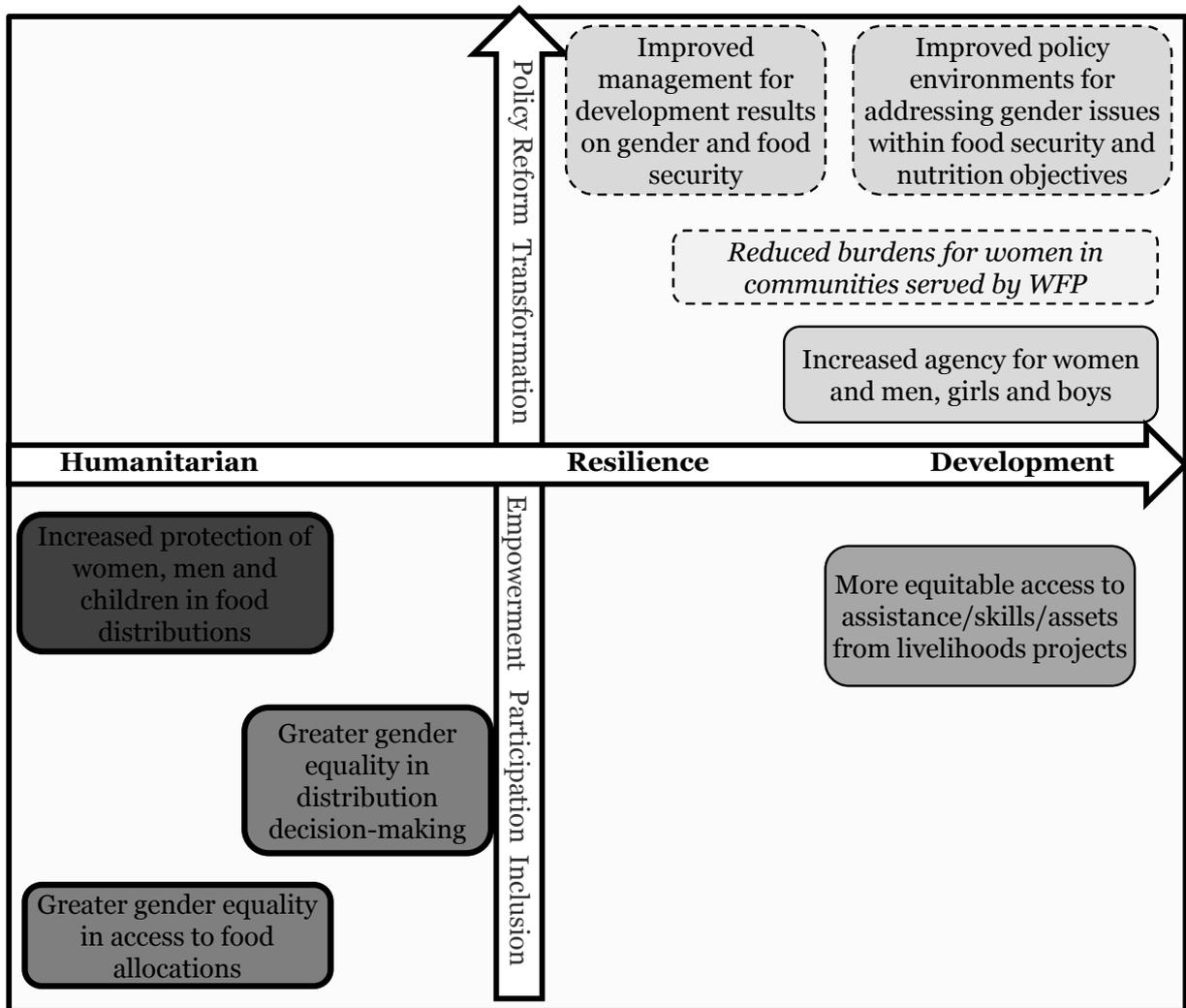
41. The evidence shows that WFP generated some potentially valuable results for gender. The greatest concentrations of results observed relate to the increased protection of women, men and children in WFP food distributions, greater gender equity in access to food allocations in communities served by WFP, and greater equity in decision-making on food distributions. These are also core indicators in standard project reports and are systematically reported. However, they reflect mostly the inclusion of women rather than a truly gender-sensitive approach.

42. Examples of the ways in which such results were achieved include:

➢ putting women's names on distribution cards, as in DRC and Ethiopia;

➢ ensuring protection measures were in place at delivery points, as in DRC and the Syrian regional emergency operation (EMOP); and

➢ ensuring that women were represented/had leadership roles in food distribution committees.

43. There is evidence that WFP activities supported women's participation and empowerment, mainly through food for work/assets. Strong results were achieved in the gaining of skills and the resultant reductions in vulnerability.

44. There is much less evidence of WFP contributing to transformative changes in gender relations. Where such changes occurred, they commonly arose from WFP's participation in social safety net programmes, some of which were large-scale.

45. In half of relevant cases, there is evidence of an improved policy environment and improved management for development results in addressing gender issues in food security and nutrition objectives, achieved for example through participation in national policy dialogue.

46. Medium-term results. The evaluation found limited evidence of contributions to medium-term changes affecting gender issues:

➢ There is some evidence in four countries of increased food security and empowerment for women and girls in communities served by WFP, mainly where WFP participated in food security or social safety net programmes with a resilience and/or livelihoods dimension.

➢ There is little evidence of improved gender relations in households, camps and communities served by WFP, or of mutually accountable development partnership for addressing gender issues in WFP countries of operation. Where these improvements occurred, as in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, WFP's contribution was part of wider efforts by the development community, such as multi-partner social safety net initiatives.

➢ While all the analysed portfolios and programmes indirectly supported the application of normative commitments – such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women – very few initiatives were explicitly designed for and geared towards these commitments; exceptions included Bangladesh, El Salvador and Malawi.

Explanatory Factors

47. Both internal and external factors influenced policy effectiveness (see Box 3). Rather than the policy itself, external factors such as the SWAP reporting system and conducive national environments were the primary drivers of WFP's efforts to address gender issues. Constraining factors were mainly internal and related to limitations in the policy's quality and implementation arrangements.

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Box 3. Factors Influencing Results

Constraining factors	
Internal	• Shortcomings in the policy's vision, clarity and coherence • Limited communication and dissemination efforts • Inadequate rigour in technical scrutiny and approval of the policy document • Absence of an agreed supportive corporate-level accountability framework • Insufficient commitment from WFP leadership and management • Insufficient communication with staff on responsibilities • Lack of human and financial resourcing, leading to shortages in technical capacity and skills for gender mainstreaming • Lack of comprehensive operational and business procedures to support gender mainstreaming • Little change in gender parity statistics in staffing • Lack of full ownership of the shift from food aid to food assistance.
External	• Limited overall WFP financing • Limited encouragement from donors, partners and governments • No significant investment in establishing and nurturing partnerships for work on gender issues, particularly at the country level
Supporting factors	
Internal	• Consultation efforts during policy development • Commitment of some staff in country offices and at Headquarters
External	• Contextual demands: gender barriers affecting food security and nutrition; access to education; access to livelihoods, etc. • Some supportive national government policy frameworks and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks • Peer pressure for accountability from SWAP since 2012 • Donor-funded programmes with inbuilt gender requirements

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment

48.   The evaluation assessed progress against the policy's vision and objectives as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: PROGRESS AGAINST POLICY COMMITMENTS	
Policy commitment	**Status (October 2013)**
Vision: To create an internal enabling environment for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women	**Limited progress**. The policy has had only limited influence on the institutional environment, although there is evidence of growing momentum and commitment
Improve the effectiveness and sustainability of WFP programmes addressing hunger in partner countries	**Partially achieved.** There is evidence of gender-sensitive programming at the country level, but this is not guided by the policy
Strengthen and maintain an institutional environment that supports and encourages gender mainstreaming	**Partially achieved.** The policy has not significantly influenced the institutional capacity for or commitment to mainstreaming gender. The building blocks of an accountability framework are in place but have not yet brought results
Promote the integration of a gender perspective into the food and nutrition policies, programmes and projects of partner countries and cooperating partners	**Partially achieved**. There is little evidence of WFP raising gender issues in dialogue and policy discussions at the country level, but there is evidence of effective responses to encouragement from the surrounding environment

49.   The evaluation concludes that the policy suffered from quality limitations stemming from its efforts to be realistic and its lack of an institutional central vision. Technical scrutiny and oversight for its approval lacked rigour, and its implementation was challenged by limited corporate recognition, commitment and leadership.

50.   WFP's institutional arrangements and incentives for addressing the policy's commitments systematically were inadequate, resulting in a fragmented institutional response and failure to generate the comprehensive gender-focused activity required.

51.   There is evidence of a growing body of gender-focused work at the country level producing potentially valuable results in increasing equitable access to food allocations and decision-making on food distributions. New food assistance modalities are also supporting women's participation and empowerment gains. However, these shifts are driven from the bottom up and are not guided by a common central vision, framework or learning from the policy.

52.   These findings – together with WFP's recent Fit for Purpose initiative, the increasing emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment within the United Nations system, and the lead-up to the post-2015 development agenda – necessitate a clearer position and a more comprehensive approach to addressing gender issues in WFP's policies, strategies and operations.

53.   **Looking to the future.** Despite the challenges and shortcomings, the evaluation report ends with a note of optimism. Although policy design and implementation encountered challenges, there is evidence of a significant increase in momentum at the corporate level since 2012, including:

➢   invigorated institutionalization of the policy;

➢   the Executive Director's championship of gender issues;

➢   additional staff and finance and a higher profile for OMG;

➢   the incorporation of gender issues – albeit to a limited degree – in the Strategic Plan (2014–2017), SRF and MRF;

➢   a draft GMAF geared to the SWAP indicators; and

➢   annual reporting on corporate action plan progress to the Board.

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54.   However, WFP should not be complacent. A shift in gear is essential for it to meet its global and institutional commitments to addressing gender issues, and implement its mandate fully and equitably. Commitments must be honoured, resources provided, and the momentum for change accompanied by systemic and comprehensive reform.

Recommendations

55.   The recommendations present the minimum requirements considered feasible through a phased approach by 2017, to align to the SWAP timeline. The evaluation cautions strongly against selecting the easy options; success requires change to ways of working in all dimensions.

56.   The recommendations were informed by a workshop in October 2013 attended by stakeholders from a range of WFP business areas, including country offices and regional bureaux. The following core principles guided their development:

➢   *"When will we ever learn?"* Both the previous gender policy evaluations noted similar shortcomings. If things are to change, WFP's commitment to addressing gender issues must be sincere and sustained.

➢   There is need to establish a clear corporate understanding that gender mainstreaming will facilitate WFP's effective delivery on its mandate, rather than competing with it or with other priorities.

➢   A shift in mindset is needed. Gender should be considered everybody's business, whatever their institutional roles and wherever they work. Responsibility does not fall on OMG alone.

➢   Failure to address gender issues creates risks, not just to meeting WFP's international and United Nations commitments, but also to WFP's effectiveness, efficiency and credibility.

➢   Leadership is essential and must be sustained. Partners – including United Nations agencies, donors, partner governments and civil society – must combine their demands for reform with supportive action.

57.   Resources are necessary to initiate and sustain policy development and embedding

58.   **Recommendation 1: Policy development, strategizing and planning**

1 a) Renew the gender policy over a year

The current policy is no longer fit for purpose in a changing institutional and global environment of accountability for gender-related results. It should be renewed. The new policy must be clearly connected to the 2014–2017 SRF and MRF and should provide a:

➢   clear vision on the gender-related results to which WFP will contribute, and a statement of "what gender means for WFP";

➢   strong evidence-based narrative linking gender issues to WFP's mandate, and stating WFP's comparative advantage in addressing gender issues;

➢   a theory of change with expected results for beneficiaries, including under each Strategic Objective; and

➢   a credible framework for action.

Policy development will require:

➢ adequate time for a rigorous process; broad and deep consultation, particularly at the field level; a review of partnerships; and dissemination;

➢ resourcing – seed funding for the first two years, to which both donors and WFP should contribute; the volume of resourcing should be clearly stated in advance, to facilitate planning and prioritization;

➢ guidance from a WFP-wide, high-level steering group that can draw on the resources of a technical advisory group comprising internal and external expertise; and

➢ intensive scrutiny, including by the Board during the approval process.

1 b) Embed gender issues in country strategies and operational plans

While the policy is being revised, all country offices should articulate in their country strategies or operational plans "what gender means" to WFP in its operating environments – including in analysis such as vulnerability analysis and mapping; what strategies will be applied; what results linked to the new Strategic Plan and SRF are sought; and how these results will be achieved.

59. **Recommendation 2: Programming and operations**

2 a) Integrate gender issues into WFP's programme cycle

It is through programmes and operations that WFP generates results for the people it serves. Gender issues must be embedded in operational instruments and procedures to become an integrated part of WFP's business by:

➢ embedding gender into the Programme Guidance Manual and the Programme Review Committee Terms of Reference to ensure that new programme designs are explicit on their intentions for addressing gender issues, including in objectives, strategies, anticipated risks and reporting; and

➢ integrating gender issues into all levels of programme logical frameworks, results frameworks and monitoring and reporting processes as a requirement for approval.

2 b) Apply the IASC Gender Marker as an instrument for supporting gender-sensitive programme/project design

The Gender Marker has considerable potential to support greater gender sensitivity in design and enable corporate-wide analysis of gender sensitivity in WFP operations.

➢ Build on current application of the Gender Marker by ensuring that ranking is conducted by internal country resources such as GenCap advisers, regional bureaux, or OMG. Country offices will require further training.

➢ Establish transparent assessment procedures, and conduct annual analysis, validation and quality checking of ratings (OMG) to support corporate reporting and more robust application of the Gender Marker.

➢ Review the scope of the Gender Marker for use beyond design, in implementation and as a monitoring and evaluation tool.

2 c) Review partnerships for addressing gender issues

WFP cannot and should not attempt to do everything alone. While developing its own capabilities to address gender issues, it is even more important that WFP seek partners to maximize results.

At the country level:

➢ clarify the national government's expectations from WFP in terms of gender issues and food security/nutrition, and identify relevant plans and partnerships;

➢ in work with other United Nations agencies and on Delivering as One, the Transformative Agenda and the cluster approach align with agencies that promote devoting attention to gender dimensions, seek opportunities for joint programmes that incorporate gender and food security/nutrition dimensions, and connect with related training opportunities where feasible;

➢ seek strategic rather than purely delivery relationships with partners that have gender expertise in food security/nutrition/livelihoods activities; and

➢ assess current partnerships for addressing gender issues to clarify the scope for improvement and enhanced mutual accountability; embed gender considerations systematically into field-level agreements with cooperating partners, including minimum standards, and ensure that compliance is tracked and reported.

60.   **Recommendation 3: Capacity development and knowledge management**

3 a) Develop technical gender expertise at all organizational levels

➢ Undertake the gender capacity assessment required by the SWAP and use it to inform future recruitment and staff development planning and strategies.

➢ Develop and implement a clear strategy to expand the pool of gender-competent policy and programme staff.

➢ Make a strong case and communicate the demand for gender expertise – technical and mainstreaming – at Headquarters and regional bureaux.

➢ Expand the roll-out of Gender Marker training to all staff, tailored to their respective functions.

➢ Develop a proactive and systematic approach to knowledge management/sharing/learning on gender (OMG).

➢ Include specific strategies, targets and actions in the new Human Resource Strategy to increase the pace towards gender parity in staffing.

3 b) Expand and sharpen the Gender Advocate Network

The network should adopt a team approach and become a sharpened resource for WFP as follows:

➢ Each division, regional bureau, country office and sub-office should have a mixed team of gender advocates – at the international and national levels, etc. – following corporately developed terms of reference.

> ➢ The network requires review and a clear rationale for selection, including seniority, dedicated time, at least modest resources, and clear, measurable and deliverable results in staff performance compacts.

> ➢ The network also requires time to meet, at least annually, to review progress and set objectives and deliverables for the year ahead.

61. **Recommendation 4: Accountability and reporting roles and responsibilities**

4 a) Ensure that gender issues are consistently tracked and reported on corporately

The period 2014–2017 provides an opportunity to ensure prominence for gender issues in corporate reporting and oversight mechanisms. Opportunities for broadening and deepening the work commenced by OMG include:

> ➢ revisiting the SRF and MRF indicators to ensure that gender considerations feature strongly, including in differentiated and appropriate gender-sensitive indicators for each Strategic Objective;

> ➢ revising corporate reporting tools, including standard project reports, to reflect more appropriate indicators of gender results, geared to those of the SRF and accompanied by clear guidance;

> ➢ compiling additional annual reports integrating existing SWAP reporting (OMG) and using them to inform the annual Board updates; quarterly interim Board updates would also enhance the profile of gender issues and facilitate the raising of resources for addressing them; and

> ➢ embedding gender considerations into guidance and quality criteria for all evaluations, and ensuring that they are reported through the Annual Evaluation Report and SWAP mechanism.

4 b) Clarify the Roles and Responsibilities for Addressing Gender Concerns across WFP

Adopt the ethos that gender issues are "everybody's business" and clarify the responsibilities of units, functions and individuals, from oversight bodies to field staff, possibly in the form of a gender mainstreaming accountability organigram. Examples include:

> ➢ building gender expertise into directors' competencies, as part of their requirement to practice in their posts, and embedding gender issues into all senior management performance compacts;

> ➢ focusing OMG's role on technical advice, coordination, knowledge management and advocacy; a clear vision, objectives and work plan are needed, commensurate with this role and OMG's current resourcing; and

> ➢ integrating gender considerations into WFP's internal risk management process, with awareness-raising and training for auditors.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIF	Gender Innovations Fund
GMAF	Gender Mainstreaming Accountability Framework
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
MRF	Management Results Framework
NGO	non-governmental organization
OMG	Gender Office
P4P	Purchase for Progress
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
SWAP	System-Wide Action Plan

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