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

Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for the Sudan (2019–2023)

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for the Sudan for 2019–2023.
2. The evaluation was conducted between May 2021 and January 2022 and assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, its efficiency in implementation and the factors explaining its performance.
3. The evaluation was conducted using a theory-based mixed-methods approach designed to serve the dual purposes of accountability and learning and to inform the preparation of a new CSP.
4. The evaluation made four strategic and one operational recommendation aimed at further strengthening WFP's positioning and contributions across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.
5. The response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of those recommendations.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SUDAN (2019–2023)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions units in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>Priority: High Deadline: November 2023 Recommendation 1: WFP should ensure that the conceptual umbrella of the next country strategic plan matches fully integrated programming on the ground, which will require closer collaboration with development partners, joint programming and drawing on expertise in fields such as conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding and political economy.</p>	Country office (regional bureau)				
<p>1.1 The country strategic plan should include closer links between nutrition interventions and recovery and resilience programmes, with a clear plan for beneficiary transition from general distribution to conditional assistance for all populations. This will require oversight management and training for WFP staff to avoid the siloed management of activities.</p>	Country office resilience unit	Agreed.	Assuming that the Sudan has an internationally recognized civilian government by 2023, the country office's next CSP will focus on transformational long-term programmes that complement and, over time, reduce the need for humanitarian response. A main focus will be on transformative, government-led, community-owned, integrated multi-year response packages targeting the most vulnerable populations. In accordance with the social protection framework, in-house expertise will be re-purposed through appropriate programme management to	Country office programme unit	December 2023

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			facilitate the design and implementation of integrated programming. The focus will be on a life-cycle programming approach, consisting of nutrition, emergency preparedness, resilience building and livelihood activities, with new elements such as a home-grown school feeding programme with strengthened links to local and regional procurement aimed at ensuring that a share of the food procured in the Sudan is delivered to schools in selected localities.		
1.2 WFP should develop a strategic approach to partnerships with a partnership plan that recognizes different expertise from national and international partners in order to strengthen synergies across the triple nexus.	Country office partnerships unit	Agreed.	A partnership action plan has been drafted and is currently undergoing the clearance process, which will be completed by the end of 2022.	Country office external relations unit	December 2022

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1.3 WFP should conduct research on, and work with other United Nations entities, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions to explore how best to incorporate social protection elements into its core activities and expand existing elements. It is further recommended that expertise necessary for the professional development of WFP staff be externally sourced. For instance, the Better Assistance in Crises Programme funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland encourages collaboration with United Nations entities on social protection capacity strengthening and training.	Country office social protection unit	Agreed.	Since the completion of the evaluation, the country office has recruited a senior national staff member to serve as a social protection officer. The terms of reference for the recruitment of a senior international staff member are currently being prepared. Social protection is a new subject area in the Sudan and only a limited number of United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations have a good understanding of what it entails. WFP currently co-chairs the social protection coordination group in the Sudan, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In the absence of a functioning government, discussions are ongoing with a number of other United Nations entities and technical government ministries on the design of social protection programmes in the Sudan, with the expectation of future government involvement. A scoping mission was carried out by the regional bureau with the aim of helping the country office	Country office programme unit	June 2023

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			<p>to articulate and position itself as a trusted and leading partner in social protection, with a particular focus on a possible partnership with the World Bank.</p> <p>Country office staff have received social protection training from the regional bureau, including via on-line courses.</p>		
<p>Priority: High Deadline: March 2024 Recommendation 2: WFP should advocate with donors to secure at least a three-year (or annual recurring) fund to enhance predictability and ensure continuity of processes over the medium to long term.</p>	Country office (regional bureau)				

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<p>2.1 WFP should give greater emphasis to resilience and livelihoods programming and build systematically on the experience of area offices in community-based integrated programming, linking resilience and recovery programmes. WFP should also increase staffing for such programming at the country offices and area offices and explore options for funding for long-term programming for selected communities, supporting the transition from emergency support to lasting solutions.</p> <p>Priority: High (November 2023)</p>	Country office programme unit, external relations unit	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>Since the completion of the evaluation there have been fundamental changes in the donor landscape in the Sudan. Long-term development programmes have, in effect, been paused. WFP is facing an unprecedented funding shortfall, forcing the suspension of some activities. In addition, the current donor landscape (following the military takeover) is marked by uncertainty as donors have restricted their cooperation with government counterparts (cooperating partners).</p>	<p>For its relationships with cooperating partners, WFP plans to introduce long-term partnership agreements that do not include any financial commitments if the current level of cooperation landscape allows. Related to the new partnership agreements, WFP is putting greater emphasis on implementing resilience building and livelihood programming. Since completion of the evaluation, WFP and UNICEF have started a joint programme on promoting resilience and social cohesion in the Darfur region. The four-year joint programme, funded by the reconstruction credit institute KfW, provides an opportunity for WFP to bolster its capacity in area offices and field offices.</p> <p>It is expected that this type of long-term resilience building programme will be scaled up if the funding and donor landscape changes.</p>	Country office programme unit, external relations unit	End of 2023

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<p>2.2 WFP should explore options for three-year contracts with reliable international non-governmental organizations and national or local non-governmental organizations. Such contracts would be reviewed annually, with performance assessed against agreed criteria, and continued except where performance is inadequate. This will build local knowledge and programming skills while reducing the transaction costs associated with annual bid review and contract renewal.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (March 2024)</p>	Country office field-level agreement unit	Agreed.	The country office agrees with the recommendation with the proviso that the current funding landscape following the military takeover of October 2021 allows for implementation. Country office management must determine the methodology to be used and the extent to which the aim of the recommendation can be achieved. The country office recognizes the value of long-term contracts, albeit without financial commitment, and will consider the introduction of such contracts in 2024, following planning discussions with its cooperating partners in October and November 2023 if the political situation by then supports such cooperation. The deadline of March 2024 is accepted to look into this because it coincides with the timing of the new CSP.	Country office strategic outcome activity managers, field-level agreement unit, external relations unit	March 2024

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2.3 WFP should provide area offices with adequate resources for monitoring resilience programmes and explore mechanisms for including such programmes in their ongoing work . Priority: Medium (March 2024)	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit	Agreed.	In order to ensure that area offices have adequate resources for the monitoring of resilience programming and the inclusion of resilience programmes in their ongoing work, the country office will assign new dedicated staff members to work on monitoring and the development of the necessary training and tools.	Country office programme unit	December 2023
Priority: High Deadline: March 2024 Recommendation 3: Capacity strengthening should play a prominent role in the new country strategic plan, reinforced by appropriate staffing and budget and the development of monitoring and evaluation indicators that measure longitudinal progress.	Country office (regional bureau)				
3.1 WFP should conduct a staffing review, assess gaps and weaknesses and redouble its efforts to ensure optimal matching between the skills of its staff and the strategic role it intends to play. Priority: High (March 2024)	Country office human resources unit (regional bureau)	Agreed.	WFP introduced the new structure as recommended in the organizational alignment exercise in September 2021. Adjustments will be made annually or when necessary to ensure the optimal structure and staffing level for implementation of the CSP.	Country office, country director, deputy country director, human resources unit	December 2023

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<p>3.2 WFP should prepare a capacity strengthening strategy to accompany the new country strategic plan. Urgent attention should be given to ensuring that the country office staff have the expertise necessary to support country capacity strengthening work in all programmes, including the Sudan family support programme, and to design additional programming with the Government at the federal and state levels. Such expertise would also be used to advise on and learn from country capacity strengthening work at the local level with civil society, including community-based organizations.</p> <p>Priority: High (March 2024)</p>	<p>Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Country Capacity Strengthening Unit)</p> <p>Country office programme unit, Sudan family support programme team</p>	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>Following the October 2021 military takeover and donors' disengagement from the Government, WFP has interrupted its work on a new CSP, as have the other members of the United Nations country team with regard to their engagement plans for the Sudan.</p> <p>The Sudan family support programme, which was implemented with the Government, has been abandoned and all the funds associated with it have been redirected by donors to other activities. WFP continues to work with technical ministries at the local level through specific funding sources (such as KfW). Sudan family support programme staff with specific technical skills have been deployed to other country office programmes.</p>	<p>The country office will ensure that a country capacity strengthening strategy is in place for full implementation only when WFP is able to work with local level technical ministries without conditions.</p>	<p>Regional bureau, headquarters strategic plan, Sudan, country office programme unit</p>	<p>March 2023</p>

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<p>3.3 WFP should develop a regularly updated stakeholder analysis that examines opportunities to work more closely with the Government at the federal and state levels and any risks involved in doing so.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (June 2023)</p>	<p>Regional bureau (headquarters)</p> <p>Country office programme unit, Government liaison unit</p>	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>In the current political climate, restrictions on engagement with government ministries and the roles and responsibilities of federal and state ministries are unclear, so a full stakeholder analysis may be unfeasible.</p>	<p>The country office continues to engage with key stakeholders, including for purposes of travel permits and life-saving humanitarian assistance. As soon as restrictions on engagement with ministries are lifted and the government structure is clarified, WFP will undertake an in-depth stakeholder analysis at the federal and state levels.</p>	<p>Country office Government liaison unit in Khartoum, country office programme unit, heads of area offices at the state level</p>	<p>June 2023 (Given the current state of uncertainty in the country and the restrictions on engagement with federal government entities, this is a provisional deadline)</p>
<p>Priority: High Deadline: March 2024</p> <p>Recommendation 4: WFP should promote a country gender analysis and strategy with realistic gender-based objectives reflected in the results frameworks. This should be accompanied by professional development support and clear, practical guidelines for the country office on how to build gender-transformative activities.</p>	<p>Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Gender Office)</p>				

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4.1 WFP should provide comprehensive and practical professional development for operational staff – including those at area and field offices – and cooperating partners on gender transformation and its translation into programming under current and planned country strategic plan outcomes. This could involve external experts, possibly from international non-governmental organizations or other United Nations or bilateral agencies with direct, hands-on experience.	Country office gender and protection team	Agreed.	In addition to the development of a gender action plan in line with the CSP, WFP will further strengthen the capacity of its staff and cooperating partners by providing capacity development opportunities to promote gender transformation in all activities. Activities may include practical training and sensitization sessions on gender norms and gender-based violence in cooperation with other United Nations entities (such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and the United Nations Population Fund) and local non-governmental organizations.	Country office programme unit, gender and protection team	End of 2023

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4.2 An advanced training programme should be offered for those who complete the training referred to in 4.1 and demonstrate interest and capability, with graduates who would be qualified to act as gender equality and women's empowerment focal points or leaders of thematic groups. The training might be offered by the regional bureau and could involve participants from other country offices in the region. However, some of the training and materials should be focused on the Sudan and informed by the situation there.	Country office gender and protection team	Agreed.	WFP will continue to plan and deliver training opportunities for staff through Gender Results Network members who have been nominated by senior management to serve as gender equality and women's empowerment focal points in area offices and field offices. Protection and accountability to affected populations (AAP) focal points in all area offices will also be trained to strengthen their capacity in gender equality and women's empowerment. The country office will actively explore and maximize the training opportunities offered by the regional bureau and headquarters.	Country office programme unit, gender and protection team	End of 2023

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<p>Priority: Medium Deadline: March 2024 Recommendation 5: WFP should urgently review the accountability mechanisms for recipient populations, including complaints procedures and feedback opportunities (for accountability to affected populations), with a view to adopting a plan for improvement.</p>					
<p>5.1 The plan should include the development of mechanisms to ensure that feedback from affected populations heavily influences annual plans and is used to adjust the implementation of activities.</p>	<p>Country office gender and protection team, AAP unit</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>The country office will further strengthen its AAP mainly by strengthening its community feedback mechanism to ensure that beneficiary feedback is well reflected in improved activity implementation. Significant work is being undertaken to strengthen the overall community feedback mechanism by establishing a national call centre and hiring senior protection and an AAP focal points for all area offices, and the country office plans to establish helpdesks where required for all operations under area offices and field offices.</p>	<p>Country office programme unit, gender and protection team</p>	<p>End of 2023</p>

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5.2 In the spirit of new ways of working, the plan could be developed jointly with other members of the United Nations country team.	Country office gender and protection team, programme unit	Agreed.	WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have recently signed a letter of understanding on working together to establish an inter-agency community feedback mechanism and ensure AAP. A UNHCR call centre operator has been assigned to WFP's community feedback mechanism. WFP has seconded a prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse advisor within the United Nations.	Country office programme unit	March 2024
5.3 WFP should undertake local case studies of the experience of beneficiaries in using accountability to affected populations mechanisms and their level of satisfaction that their concerns are heard and acted upon. There should also be selected focus group discussions with community leaders.	Country office gender and protection team, AAP unit	Agreed.	WFP will plan and conduct a comprehensive satisfaction survey and analysis with a view to better understanding community expectations of WFP's AAP, in particular regarding the functionality of the hotline as a key communication channel of the community feedback mechanism. This will facilitate further improvement of AAP mechanisms so that they better meet the needs of the people that WFP serves.	Country office gender and protection team	End of 2023