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Summary of the work of the 2023 first regular session  
of the Executive Board

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## Draft summary of the work of the 2023 first regular session of the Executive Board

### Table of contents

Current and future strategic issues .....	3
2022/EB.2/1    Opening remarks by the Executive Director .....	3
<b>Operational matters .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Oral global overview on humanitarian needs and operational concerns and priorities.....	5
<b>Regional overviews .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Latin America and the Caribbean portfolio .....	7
Western Africa portfolio .....	9
Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe portfolio.....	12
<b>Special address by the United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Regional overviews (continued) .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Asia and the Pacific portfolio .....	17
Eastern Africa portfolio.....	19
Southern Africa portfolio.....	21
<b>Policy issues.....</b>	<b>23</b>
2023/EB.1/2    WFP aviation policy.....	23
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean portfolio .....</b>	<b>24</b>
2023/EB.1/3    Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela interim country strategic plan (2023–2025) .....	24
<b>Evaluation reports .....</b>	<b>25</b>
2023/EB.1/4    Summary report on the strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS and management response.....	25
2023/EB.1/5    Summary report on the evaluation of the policy on WFP's role in peacebuilding in transition settings and management response.....	26

2023/EB.1/6	Synthesis of evidence and lessons on WFP's performance measurement and monitoring from centralized and decentralized evaluations (2018–2021) and management response .....	29
<b>Western Africa portfolio.....</b>		<b>30</b>
	Overview of evaluations of CSPs for countries in the Western Africa region .....	30
2023/EB.1/7	Summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for the Central African Republic (2018–2022) and management response.....	32
	Central African Republic country strategic plan (2023–2027).....	32
2023/EB.1/8	Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Nigeria (2019–2022) and management response .....	33
	Nigeria country strategic plan (2023–2027).....	33
2023/EB.1/9	Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Chad (2019–2023) and management response.....	36
2023/EB.1/10	Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Mauritania (2019–2023) and management response.....	37
<b>Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe portfolio .....</b>		<b>38</b>
2023/EB.1/11	Summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for Algeria (2019–2022) and management response.....	38
<b>Special address by the President of the World Bank Group.....</b>		<b>40</b>
2023/EB.1/12	Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for the State of Palestine (2018–2022) and management response.....	42
	State of Palestine country strategic plan (2023–2028).....	42
2023/EB.1/13	Islamic Republic of Iran interim country strategic plan (2023–2025).....	43
2023/EB.1/14	Libya country strategic plan (2023–2025).....	43
<b>Policy issues (continued).....</b>		<b>44</b>
	Oral update on disability inclusion .....	44
<b>Event to honour Executive Director David Beasley.....</b>		<b>46</b>
	Evaluation reports (continued).....	46
	Oral update on the management response to the evaluation of WFP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic .....	46
<b>Administrative and managerial matters.....</b>		<b>48</b>
2023/EB.1/15	Establishment of a selection panel for the appointment of Independent Oversight Advisory Committee members.....	48
2023/EB.1/16	Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit relevant to the work of WFP .....	48
2023/EB.1/17	Summary of the work of the 2022 second regular session of the Executive Board.....	49
<b>Verification of adopted decisions and recommendations.....</b>		<b>49</b>
<b>Acronyms .....</b>		<b>50</b>

## Current and future strategic issues

### 2022/EB.2/1 Opening remarks by the Executive Director

1. Noting that the current Board session would be his eighteenth and final session of his term of office, the Executive Director thanked the Executive Board, management and staff of WFP for their commitment and contributions to the work of the organization in combatting global hunger. Looking back over his six-year term at WFP, he remembered WFP staff and collaborators who had lost their lives serving the world's vulnerable and conflict-affected communities, but he also recalled moments of celebration such as WFP's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020.
2. The Executive Director outlined the growth in WFP's work since he had joined the organization in April 2017. Between 2017 and 2022 the global food security situation had deteriorated significantly with the number of hungry people growing from 80 million to 350 million and the number of level 2 and level 3 emergency responses in which WFP was involved rising from 12 to 24. Over the same period total contributions had increased from USD 5.7 billion to USD 14.4 billion, the number of beneficiaries from 82 million to 160 million and the number of staff from 15,000 to 23,000. There had also been massive increases in WFP funding from the private sector and international financial institutions, WFP's local procurement of food and its use of cash-based transfers (CBTs).
3. In addition to implementing its own life-saving and life-changing programmes WFP had made major contributions to the wider humanitarian community by, for example, negotiating humanitarian access in conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Yemen; providing air transport for humanitarian and medical personnel and equipment in 173 countries when commercial airlines ceased to operate during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic; and taking a leading role in the establishment and implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative when food supplies from Ukraine were blocked owing to the conflict in that country.
4. Within WFP, major improvements had been made to the risk management structure and to workforce culture with the establishment of a dedicated Assistant Executive Director position and the adoption of the core WFP values of integrity, collaboration, commitment, humanity and inclusion. Gender parity in the workforce had improved: the proportion of women staff had grown from 34 percent in 2017 to 42 percent in 2022 at the global level, from 30 to 39 percent at the national level and from 42 to 48 percent at the international level. The number of women assistant executive directors had increased from one to three out of five. The proportion of African nationals in the international workforce had risen from 24 percent to 29 percent, and the proportion of staff on fixed-term rather than short-term or consultancy contracts had increased from 39 to 50 percent.
5. Saying that there was much work still to be done, the Executive Director highlighted the value of school feeding programmes in keeping children, in particular girls, in school and preventing adolescent pregnancy, child marriage, recruitment into terrorist groups, conflict, malnutrition and – ultimately – migration. He urged beneficiary countries to take greater ownership of such programmes, noting that global humanitarian spending of USD 30 billion in 2021 had been dwarfed by military spending of USD 2.1 trillion.
6. Quoting the words of Winston Churchill at the end of the second world war, when he said "[it] was the people who had the courage of a lion – I simply had the luck to give the roar", the Executive Director thanked the Board for its courage, integrity, drive, creativity and support and for allowing him to roar on its behalf.
7. Board members, including four speaking on behalf of their lists and other groups of countries, congratulated WFP on the sixtieth anniversary of its establishment and expressed gratitude to and admiration of the Executive Director, saying that he had set an example for

the humanitarian community and for WFP in particular. They thanked him for speaking on behalf of the world's vulnerable people and for his work in strengthening WFP and its interventions. Several members said that the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize was a manifestation of the Executive Director's successful leadership, and many thanked him for his work in their own countries and regions, where WFP was a valued partner. Members also thanked the outgoing President and Bureau of the Board for their service over the previous year and welcomed the incoming President and Bureau members.

8. Turning their attention to the work and staff of WFP, members expressed condolences for the family of the staff member who had lost his life in the recent earthquake in Türkiye. Many members praised WFP for its rapid response in the aftermath of that and other crises, and a number cited the organization's field-based staff as one of its greatest strengths. Members welcomed WFP's success in increasing the flow of flexible and predictable funding and engagement with international financial institutions; its provision of shared services and leadership in collective humanitarian response; its sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources with countries and other partners, including through the facilitation of South-South and triangular cooperation arrangements; and the shift in WFP's role from the direct provision of food assistance and services to the strengthening of national systems and capacity to deliver food and nutrition security, including through its technical support for school feeding programmes.
9. Members encouraged WFP to maintain its efforts in those areas and to intensify its work on resilience building and addressing the root causes of hunger as part of its "changing lives" agenda, including through enhanced collaboration with its United Nations and other partners. A number of members said that nexus approaches – in particular the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, but also, for example, the water–food nexus – were relevant to work on resilience building. They advised that such approaches be based on analyses of local circumstances and exploit the comparative advantages of each actor. There were requests for regular updates on WFP's work at the humanitarian-development–peace nexus and for clarification of WFP's comparative advantages in joint work on resilience building.
10. Noting the worsening prospects for funding, many members expressed their countries' commitment to maintaining or increasing their contributions to WFP, including by providing the unearmarked and multi-year funding that WFP required for its work on changing lives and by sharing their own expertise and experience through South–South cooperation arrangements.
11. Many Board members commented on the conflict in Ukraine and reiterated their countries' commitment to maintaining support for the people of that country. Members emphasized the conflict's effect on global food security, in particular through increased food, fuel and fertilizer prices, saying that the Black Sea Grain Initiative had helped to mitigate those problems by calming markets and easing food price increases. They urged all parties to the related Istanbul agreement to extend the grain initiative without conditions beyond its current end date of March 2023 and to increase the inspection capacity of the Joint Coordination Centre. With regard to conflict more generally, a number of members expressed condemnation for the targeting of humanitarian staff in conflict settings and the use of food as a weapon of war. Two members called for the lifting of the international sanctions imposed on their countries, saying that they had a negative impact on humanitarian response.
12. A number of members urged WFP to continue to promote adherence to international law and the humanitarian principles, including through advocacy with government and other partners, and to follow a "do-no-harm" and conflict-sensitive approach in all of its programmes, including by implementing the forthcoming strategy on the mainstreaming of

conflict sensitivity. Members praised WFP for its role in negotiating humanitarian access in conflict settings and promoting exemptions from sanctions regimes for humanitarian purposes. In all of those efforts it was essential that WFP maintain political neutrality and show itself to be a model and accountable humanitarian actor.

13. Turning to WFP's work on particular issues, members welcomed the recent progress in improving gender equality, protection and inclusion, and one member requested an update on WFP's efforts to improve disability inclusion in the workplace. There were expressions of support for WFP's work on climate change adaptation, including its focus on anticipatory action, and its efforts to obtain access to blended and climate financing. A number of members said that the transformation of global food systems was essential to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and suggested that the stocktaking exercise taking place in July in Rome to provide an update on progress since the 2021 United Nations food systems summit would provide an opportunity to identify ways to achieve that transformation. Members also welcomed progress in nutrition and school feeding programmes and in South-South and triangular cooperation, with many expressing their countries' commitment to supporting WFP in those areas.
14. There were calls for WFP to prioritize the most acute needs in the face of anticipated funding gaps; to ensure that its operations were tailored to local circumstances and needs through partnerships with local organizations; and to ensure that it had the right skills and governance structures in place. One member suggested that work on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse go beyond compliance mechanisms to include programmes that actively prevented sexual exploitation. Another called for greater global attention to "forgotten crises" such as those in the Sahel and West Africa.
15. Individual speakers highlighted what their governments saw as the main threats facing the world in 2023, including ongoing conflict, input price rises leading to a crisis in food availability and the likelihood of an El Niño event and further floods and droughts in many countries, and there were calls for increased investment and greater collaboration on joint action to transform global food systems and address the challenges.
16. The Executive Director thanked Board members for their kind comments and welcomed their collaborative support in WFP discussions and strategic decision making. The current moment, he concluded, was a turning point when all actors must come together to fully exploit all opportunities to create a better world.

## **Operational matters**

### **Oral global overview on humanitarian needs and operational concerns and priorities**

17. In his global overview on humanitarian needs and operational concerns and priorities the acting Deputy Executive Director, Supply Chain and Emergencies Department, reported that 345 million people worldwide were expected to be food insecure in 2023, including 43 million at "crisis" level and 846,000 in famine-like conditions.
18. With 60 million children malnourished, action to combat malnutrition was hampered by a global shortage of specialized nutritious foods. In response WFP was working to develop a stable supply of such foods through procurement by country offices, which was expected to have an impact in the short term. WFP was also working with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and hopefully would be with the World Bank, to support investment in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Global South, a long-term measure that would ultimately provide a new source of supply while strengthening local food systems.

19. It was clear that efforts to respond to humanitarian crises and address root causes were being undermined by multiple crises that posed extreme hunger risks. Principles underpinning humanitarian action were under immense stress, particularly in areas of conflict. Administrative constraints and interference in humanitarian operations and programmes were becoming more common. In response WFP was working to enhance access, integrating the knowledge and experience of its staff and leveraging past successes in places such as South Sudan and Afghanistan. Over the previous three years, WFP had been building a network of professionals focused on enhancing the organization's ability to interact with governments and militaries to facilitate its operations while safeguarding its principles. Simultaneously, it was working with its partners and other United Nations entities to ensure that such efforts facilitated humanitarian action.
20. Although conflict was the key driver of food insecurity and malnutrition, other factors such as climate change, economic decline and the weakening of governance structures and accountability to citizens also contributed. Gross domestic product was no longer a determinant of a country's stability or fragility: most of the new entries in the list of 60 fragile countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report "States of Fragility 2022" were middle-income countries. To tackle the multiple crises the international community needed a new collaborative framework that leveraged the knowledge and capability of all concerned. With its deep knowledge of the communities left behind, its extensive presence and reach and its ability to deploy at scale, WFP was well placed to contribute to that framework.
21. Board members, including one speaking on behalf of a list, described the current level of global food insecurity and malnutrition as alarming, thanked WFP for its work and expressed support for the organization in its efforts to meet the growing need. One member said that while it played an important supporting role in development WFP's unmatched global reach and expertise in logistics, supply chains and emergency response made it an indispensable leader on humanitarian action. Saying that WFP's humanitarian work had proved particularly relevant in complex crises where other actors had been hampered by capacity or access constraints, another member called for durable solutions to enable WFP to remain agile, responsive and independent.
22. Several Board members echoed the Deputy Executive Director's call for a new approach in the international community given the changing global situation. One said that in a scenario of multiple crises humanitarian organizations, donors and international financial institutions needed a more sophisticated, nuanced vision that dealt with the new factors contributing to fragility. Another member called for a strategy for middle-income countries that would involve working with governments and well-functioning national institutions and leveraging South-South cooperation.
23. Many members highlighted the aspects of WFP's work that they considered to be of particular importance in the current situation, including conflict-sensitive programming adapted to gender, age, disability and sexual orientation; work at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; resilience building for long-term impact; partnership with local organizations, especially those for or led by women, on project design and implementation; and the use of multisectoral and anticipatory approaches to prevent famine.
24. Various ways of coping with soaring funding requirements were proposed. Two Board members urged the international community to broaden WFP's funding base. Other recommendations were for WFP to be innovative and imaginative; to improve humanitarian programme and budget efficacy; to improve targeting and prioritize the people in most need of assistance; to make full use of local actors, empowering them and enhancing their resilience; and to reach agreement on common standards for humanitarian data sharing.

25. One Board member called for discussion of malnutrition, calling it a complex issue encompassing adult, mother and child nutrition. Another member asked WFP to work to address malnutrition in the short term through food fortification and asked about its strategy for a long-term nexus approach aimed at dietary diversification.
26. Responding to member comments the acting Deputy Executive Director, Supply Chain and Emergencies Department, said that multiple crises presented systemic risks that must be addressed together; the Sustainable Development Goals provided a basis for a framework for WFP to address such issues, with partners and under the leadership of national governments, while its strategic plan enabled it to support efforts to mitigate some of the systemic risks.
27. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, added that WFP's focus on malnutrition had two aspects: the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition, which was core to strategic outcome 1 of the strategic plan, on meeting urgent food and nutrition needs; and the improvement of health and education outcomes, which required a broad nutrition-integrated approach.

## **Regional overviews**

### **Latin America and the Caribbean portfolio**

28. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean said the situation in the region was dire, with 40 million people in the countries where WFP had a presence food-insecure, 11 million of them severely so, 2 million more than a year earlier. Forty-four percent of households were eating fewer meals and 30 percent were prioritizing children and older persons when food was scarce. The region faced a "polycrisis", with indebted governments, growing inflation, increasingly severe climate disasters, a migratory crisis, falling agricultural production and rising social unrest. The World Bank estimated that economic growth would slow from 3.6 percent in 2022 to 1.3 percent in 2023.
29. Food prices in the region remained high, and high fertilizer prices and recurring climate events threatened future food availability. La Niña had already caused harvest losses, especially in the Southern Cone; El Niño would probably cause dry conditions in Central America and the Caribbean and in northern South America from June to November 2023, along with above-average rainfall in the south.
30. The region's food insecurity and economic crisis were spurring migration. In 2022, 235,000 people had crossed the Darien Gap into Panama and another 500,000 were expected to do so in 2023. The latest WFP survey showed that 75 percent of people who migrated did so for economic reasons, and 40 percent owing to a lack of food. Twenty percent of those surveyed in Central America had expressed the desire to emigrate.
31. In 2022 WFP had directly assisted 8 million people with 58,000 mt of food and USD 186 million in CBTs and had reached 20 million people indirectly through its work on social protection, institutional capacity-building, social registration, nutrition and gender social and behaviour change, preparation for and early response to climate events and food fortification. Food acquisition had increased by 35 percent over 2022, and the volume of food purchased from smallholder farmers had risen by 17 percent, contributing to regional goals established by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with the aim of reducing regional food imports. In 2023 WFP planned to assist 9 million direct beneficiaries and 20 million indirect beneficiaries at a cost of USD 1 billion, of which only 35 percent had been secured to date.
32. WFP was supporting the economic empowerment of women through measures such as CBTs for survivors of gender-based violence in Colombia and integrated resilience-building for Indigenous women in Guatemala; working with smallholder and family farmers to

- mitigate future harvest risks and support school feeding; and support for the introduction of parametric macroinsurance policies with the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, which had provided benefits for people in Nicaragua affected by Hurricane Julia.
33. The polycrisis in the region coincided with high levels of national debt incurred to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. WFP had worked directly with CELAC, CARICOM, the Central American Integration System and the Organization of American States on their joint responses, focusing on social protection, school feeding and food security, and planned to support a 2023 high-level event in Brazil on human capital development, nutrition-sensitive social protection and school feeding. WFP was also leading an inter-agency taskforce supporting 16 countries in implementing their United Nations food systems summit road maps.
  34. WFP operations considered especially critical included those in Colombia, where 30 percent of the country's population and 54 percent of the migrant population were food insecure; WFP was providing emergency response, school feeding, resilience building, livelihood support and socioeconomic integration for migrants and was working with the Government to strengthen the national social protection system.
  35. In Central America 8 million people were severely or moderately food insecure. WFP, with the World Bank and the Partnership for Central America, had recently launched the "Disaster Risk Insurance and Finance in Central America Consortium" to support 2 million smallholder farmers in communities at risk from climate change in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. An Adaptation Fund project would be starting in 2023 to provide more than 275,000 people in Honduras and El Salvador with tools and integrated risk management services. WFP and its partners had also launched a humanitarian response plan for El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala; the previous plan had only received one third of the requested funding, and donors were urged to fund the new plan. WFP needed USD 47 million over the next six months to cover the need in the three countries.
  36. In Nicaragua, three hurricanes in two years, rising food prices and surging agricultural input costs had aggravated the situation in already vulnerable areas of the Dry Corridor and the Caribbean coast. The cost of WFP school feeding programmes had risen three-fold from 2020 to 2023, leading to an urgent need for USD 4 million to reach 182,000 children with school feeding in 2023. WFP's work with smallholder organizations in recent years had been key to meeting quality and quantity requirements of institutional markets, as well as competitive private sector requirements. WFP's Nicaragua country office was currently buying more than USD 1.2 million in food from smallholder farmers, most of them women.
  37. In Haiti 7.3 million people had low food consumption. Fuel prices were rising due to shortages and the central bank had declared an economic recession, with inflation reaching 47.2 percent in October 2022. Mainly owing to increasing armed gang violence and kidnapping there were 155,000 displaced persons in metropolitan Port au Prince. In 2022 WFP had assisted 1.8 million people with USD 28 million in CBTs and 13,200 mt of food. WFP had established a humanitarian corridor between the Dominican Republic and Haiti as a back-up for land, sea and air routes. United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) services were essential to emergency response in Haiti and should be maintained at the current level. WFP had reached agreement with smallholder producers to supply food for the home-grown school feeding programme launched by the Government with WFP support. The Government of Argentina was also supporting food security and nutrition in schools through a reactivated school gardens initiative currently being scaled up by the Government of France. WFP needed USD 155 million to cover its operations in Haiti over the next six months.



38. Social unrest and citizen mobilization were burgeoning in 2022 and the region was destabilizing rapidly, even though it had the capacity to feed 1 billion people. Its water reserves and forests reduced the global impact of the climate crisis and its human capital was young and well educated. Substantial investment in innovation and development was urgently needed to capture the region's huge potential.
39. Board members thanked the regional director for her thorough description of the situation and voiced concern at the high level of need in the region. The situation in Haiti was of particular concern. All those who spoke affirmed their support for WFP's work in the region.
40. Members from the region echoed the regional director's description of the situation, saying that increasing inequality and poverty were a threat to democracy and stability, and they urged WFP to strengthen its development and resilience building work. They drew attention to the growing contribution of governments of the region and appealed to donors to bridge the funding gap.
41. Two other members reported that they had participated alongside WFP in the recent high-level round table on the 2023 Northern Central America humanitarian response plan to galvanize support for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.
42. One member asked whether the current political climate could disrupt humanitarian assistance in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, as well as for an update on WFP plans to diversify funding for the Haiti response. Other members requested additional information on anticipatory action and estimating indirect beneficiaries.
43. An observer asked for information on the sources of the information presented by the Regional Director, saying that the international sanctions were preventing certain countries from applying their economic policies and thus from making progress against hunger. A Board member said in response that humanitarian assistance such as that provided by WFP was exempt from the sanctions in question. Another observer said that 10 percent of the people in his country, where WFP did not have a presence, were migrant, and he urged the Board to pay closer attention to the migration crisis in the region.
44. The regional director said that in the face of the USD 155 million six-month funding gap for Haiti WFP was working with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and private sector entities to broaden its funding base. Governments of the region were major contributors to projects implemented through WFP. Regarding anticipatory action, the areas of greatest focus were the Caribbean, the Dry Corridor and the Pacific coast of South America. Such action included the development of early warning systems, resilience programmes and school feeding. With regard to estimating indirect beneficiaries, WFP had in 2022 developed guidelines for estimating tier 2 and tier 3 beneficiaries of social protection and country capacity strengthening activities, among others. On the topic of migration she observed that while dealing with root causes was very difficult WFP was playing closer attention to resilience building, for instance with the introduction of microinsurance schemes. She also said that WFP was keenly aware of migration issues even in countries where it did not have a presence and was working with governments to assess the situation. Others in the United Nations system were also working on the migration situation in the region.

### **Western Africa portfolio**

45. The Regional Director for Western Africa reported that the November 2022 cadre harmonisé projections indicated that 48.2 million people in the region would be food-insecure during the 2023 lean season, representing a four-fold increase over the previous five years. The projections also confirmed the risk of catastrophic levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 5) in Burkina Faso, northeast Nigeria and Mali owing to conflict and its impact on trade, access to markets and food production. In the previous

five years WFP had dramatically scaled up crisis response operations in the region to deal with the combined effects of climate, conflict, COVID-19 and rising costs; in 2022 the crisis response budget was four times higher than it had been in 2018.

46. The security situation in the Gulf of Guinea countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin was deteriorating. In the north of Togo civilians had been killed in three recent incidents, and people were fleeing to Benin. WFP estimated that refugee and internally displaced populations in northern Togo could increase from 20,000 to 80,000 in 2023. An emergency operation to assist about 50,000 people had been launched at the Government's request. WFP had invested USD 7 million over the previous three years to strengthen its emergency preparedness and cash transfer capacity and the national preparedness and response capacity in the Gulf of Guinea countries. WFP had recently completed a study to identify alternative supply routes for the Central Sahel and was in the process of testing alternate corridors. With an established presence in the northern parts of the four Gulf of Guinea countries, WFP was poised to step up assistance and support governments in strengthening resilience in border zone communities if funding became available.
47. Governments were increasingly asking WFP for technical and operational support for social protection. WFP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had been supporting 2 million people in Mali, Mauritania and the Niger through social protection programmes since 2020 and planned to support an additional 1 million in 2023. In Mauritania WFP was supporting the first expansion of the national social protection programme to urban areas and in the Niger it was working with the Government to assess ways to help communities absorb the impacts of drought. In Mali WFP was encouraging the Government to further leverage social protection investments to improve access to healthier diets and nutrition outcomes. There was a need to rethink how chronic and predictable crises were addressed in the region and how to further leverage national social protection systems to help transition people out of emergency assistance. WFP was strengthening its research and evidence generation agenda to enhance its ability to advise policy makers on the matter.
48. Governments and regional institutions were also increasingly seeking support for efforts to strengthen their local food systems. Several countries had recently shown interest in working with WFP to support the implementation of the food and agriculture delivery compacts that they had presented at the African Union's Dakar 2 summit on food sovereignty and resilience in January 2023.
49. In the Sahel WFP's integrated resilience programme was entering a new five-year cycle, and WFP had started to witness some key results of people's increased capacity to withstand shocks; in the Niger, for example, 80 percent of the villages supported by WFP resilience building activities in areas classified as extremely vulnerable by the Government had not required emergency assistance during the 2022 lean season, unlike other villages in such areas. Since 2018 WFP had rehabilitated over 220,300 hectares of degraded land in some 2,750 villages and invested in the resilience of close to 3 million people in the Sahel countries. Resilience-building efforts were increasingly focusing on managing water for livelihoods, cultivation, livestock and groundwater recharge. A recent article in *Nature*, on assessing the impact of agroecological interventions in the Niger through remotely sensed changes in vegetation, attested to the positive impact of WFP activities.
50. WFP had been working since 2016 to strengthen local value chains by encouraging the production of nutritious foods as an important step in preventing malnutrition. In 2020, when the availability of specialized nutritious food had reached an all-time low in the region owing to COVID-19 and insecurity, WFP had launched a project in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger working closely with national institutions and other stakeholders. In two years the regulatory framework for norms, standards, quality control and certification had been strengthened across Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, 40,000 smallholder farmers and

- 22 industrial and artisanal food transformation units had been equipped and trained and some 30,000 mt of locally processed specialized nutritious foods had been sold to retailers and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Those achievements were reflected in positive trends in nutrition and food security outcome indicators. Plans to expand the project to Mauritania and Chad were being explored.
51. As part of its work on developing regional partnerships WFP was poised to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Potential areas of collaboration included research, assessment and monitoring, emergency preparedness and response, supply chains, food systems and climate resilience. With the aim of continuing to strengthen its research and evidence generation agenda, WFP was also developing and formalizing strategic partnerships with various institutions, including the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for impact evaluations and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research for climate analysis. WFP was collaborating on research partnerships with universities in Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Canada and the United States of America. It was also developing a partnership platform for food security research, assessment, monitoring and learning, engaging international and local experts to support WFP's work.
  52. With regard to funding the regional director reported that in 2022 it had been 51 percent higher than in 2021, with support from 39 governments, including USD 110 million from nine countries of the region and record contributions from the United States, Germany, the European Commission, France, Luxembourg and South Korea. Funding from the private sector had more than doubled in 2022, to USD 33 million. Need nevertheless continued to outstrip available resources; 2023 funding needs were expected to exceed USD 2.2 billion to support over 17 million people, and the funding gap for the next six months was USD 875 million.
  53. Board members, including one speaking on behalf of a list, noted the challenging operating conditions in the region and thanked WFP for maintaining its humanitarian assistance there, in particular its efforts to ensure continued assistance in the Sahel.
  54. One Board member highlighted the role of complementary partnerships with entities such as UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), as well as bilateral agencies, in meeting the overall skyrocketing needs of the region. He submitted that, given the multidimensional nature of the crisis in the region, it was essential to work simultaneously and coherently across all dimensions of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to reduce need over time while responding to acute emergencies. In his view WFP's approach in the Sahel was properly aimed at addressing the underlying drivers of food insecurity through integrated resilience building focused on the most vulnerable. Another Board member, speaking on behalf of a list, also expressed appreciation for WFP's efforts to promote local food production, noting that countries in the region were often net food importers, which contributed to large fiscal deficits and high debt loads.
  55. Another member applauded the overall progress made in diversifying the donor base to help meet funding requirements and encouraged WFP to continue its efforts in that regard, in particular to ensure a robust and appropriate humanitarian response in the Central African Republic.
  56. The regional director confirmed that access in the region was a major challenge, particularly in the Central Sahel. WFP's strategy included providing staff with training by the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation, enhancing WFP's situation analysis capability and further engaging with community leaders. In Burkina Faso WFP had established a dedicated fleet of 25 trucks and had mounted a three-month air support operation. The regional director stressed that the situation remained dangerous, prompting the testing of

new access routes and the establishment of a new hub in Niamey. WFP was working within the United Nations system to engage with government authorities on access, but donors were encouraged also to talk to the governments involved.

57. Regarding international financial institution support for social protection programmes, the regional director reported that a meeting had been held with the World Bank social protection team in March 2022 to discuss collaboration; a second meeting was planned to take place soon. Ideally the lean season response would be supported through a national shock-responsive social protection scheme, a project that donor countries could help governments get off the ground very quickly. On the topic of school feeding, the regional director said that WFP and the ECOWAS commissioners for economic affairs and agriculture and human development and social affairs were discussing a regional conference of ECOWAS countries on how to reap the full economic benefits of home-grown school feeding programmes, such as by promoting indigenous foods to reduce reliance on imported food.

### **Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe portfolio**

58. The Regional Director for Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe began her overview of the region by showing a video on the earthquake in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic, reporting that the thousands of dead had included a WFP staff member.
59. WFP had responded to the earthquake within hours and was currently reaching 2.3 million people in Türkiye and 1.3 million people in the Syrian Arab Republic.
60. In Ukraine donor funding was being used to bring food to the front lines, restore ruptured supply chains and build local capacity, and WFP was working with Ukraine's strong civil society organizations to deliver a full cycle of humanitarian response. Sixty percent of WFP's humanitarian partners were local organizations. A second video was screened showcasing the work being done in Ukraine.
61. WFP continued to invest in Ukraine's social protection system, to support the Government in strengthening its registry system and to provide multipurpose cash. Using its Building Blocks platform, it was coordinating cash assistance for 35 organizations, resulting in savings of USD 70 million, enough to support an extra 390,000 people for three months. Data from a multisector needs assessment and government data on social benefits would be used to refine targeting and determine the gaps between needs and the Government's social assistance.
62. WFP provided food in Ukraine where supply chains were broken and vouchers where they were fragile, with the latter supporting supply chains by attracting customers to shops and encouraging shop owners to open more branches. WFP continued to prioritize local food procurement, and between local procurement, imports through the Black Sea Grain Initiative and cash transfers had injected USD 700 million into the local economy over the previous 11 months.
63. Looking ahead, the World Bank had reported that 2023 could be equally challenging, highlighting concern about fragile states such as Jordan and Lebanon and states with conflict such as Libya, the State of Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.
64. Food insecurity in the region had doubled since before the Arab Spring in 2010, and WFP assistance had reached six times as many people (37 million) by 2022. Despite donor generosity funding was not keeping up with current need, and hunger was expected to increase.

65. Twelve years of conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic had left 12 million people with not enough food and another 2.9 million at risk. In the previous year, malnutrition rates had risen by 50 percent for children and 100 percent for pregnant and lactating women. Given current indications of funding for 2023, monthly food assistance for up to 70 percent of beneficiaries, 3.8 million people, could end in July.
66. In Yemen WFP had managed to keep famine at bay through large-scale food assistance but had been forced to reduce ration frequency and size in 2022 due to funding constraints and increased operational costs. Funding for Yemen was urgently needed.
67. In Iraq, without new funds WFP assistance could no longer reach internally displaced persons by March or refugees by May.
68. In the State of Palestine WFP assistance to 375,000 people would halt by mid-April. In the absence of funding for the Palestinian Authority WFP was providing the only social safety net, and the loss of its funding could contribute to destabilization.
69. In Lebanon, where annual inflation stood at 142 percent, the most recent IPC classification exercise showed that food insecurity would increase to 2.3 million people in the first quarter of 2023, or 42 percent of the combined Lebanese and refugee population.
70. WFP continued to work to reduce need in the region, and significant progress had been made in strengthening the ability of government social protection systems to meet it, for example in Lebanon where WFP worked with the World Bank to create an integrated social protection architecture, in Jordan where it worked with the Jordan national fund to bring efficiency to the national social benefit system and in Iraq, where it worked with the Government to strengthen targeting in the public distribution system.
71. In the Syrian Arab Republic resilience programmes benefited communities directly, and the restoration of irrigation channels was expected to reduce costs by USD 50 million a year by eliminating the need for general food assistance. In Ukraine, where an estimated 26 percent of cultivated land was unusable as a direct result of the war, WFP and FAO were poised to start a demining project focusing on small-scale farmers in partnership with the Government and the Swiss Demining Foundation (*Fondation Suisse de Déminage*). In Lebanon WFP and FAO were mapping potential wheat growing areas, and with the right support Lebanon could significantly reduce its dependence on imports. In Iraq, WFP programmes had led to the restoration of 40,000 hectares of agricultural land, allowing 300,000 people to return to their lands and farmers to increase production four-fold in one and a half years.
72. Board members thanked WFP for its work in the region and for its rapid response to the recent earthquake in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic. Several offered condolences to the victims of the earthquake, including WFP's own Levent Kucukaslan. One member said that WFP's earthquake response had demonstrated the usefulness of flexible, predictable funding and called on Board members to attend a donor conference in Brussels to raise funds for the response.
73. Several Board members expressed concern regarding the crises in the region, in particular those in Ukraine, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine, and pledged their continued support, with one noting in that context the importance of flexible regional funding.
74. Two Board members deplored the scale of farmland destruction in Ukraine, particularly given the state of global food insecurity, and another commended WFP on its scale-up over the past year, in particular to provide assistance near the front lines where the need was greatest.

75. Regarding Yemen, one Board member commended WFP's provision of in-kind food assistance and critical nutrition commodities to food-insecure communities but expressed concern regarding ongoing operational challenges and bureaucratic impediments in the north. Another member observed that the USD 1 billion raised at a recent pledging event in Geneva demonstrated donors' continued commitment to humanitarian work in Yemen.
76. One member encouraged WFP to step up its advocacy work so that other countries in the region were not forgotten, and another called for increased cooperation to accelerate climate resilience work in the region.
77. In response to some of the questions raised by Board members the regional director thanked them for their support for the region, noting that flexible and quick funding had been key to the quick scale-up for the earthquake response. Overall, funding had increased by one third, helping to counter higher fuel and food prices, albeit not enough to meet the rising need. The war in Ukraine had had a heavy impact in the region, and while the Black Sea Grain Initiative had helped to bring down prices on international markets many countries of the region still suffered from rising prices.
78. Regarding access, the regional director highlighted that following the earthquake access to the northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic had increased and become more regular.
79. Regarding priority setting she said that food rations for many programmes had already been halved, while the value of CBTs could not be increased due to funding constraints. The next step was to cut the number of beneficiaries according to criteria designed to prioritize the most vulnerable. In countries like the Syrian Arab Republic up to 70 percent of beneficiaries could be cut off due to funding constraints.
80. Regarding coordination of responses, she highlighted the resilience work in the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Ukraine carried out in partnership with FAO, as well as work with UNICEF on social protection and school meals and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on refugees.
81. The regional director also highlighted the obstacles WFP faced in Yemen and how it was working to overcome them while ensuring that its standards were respected. Female workers were not allowed to travel, for example, and as a result WFP had halted UNHAS travel for all national staff. Advocacy on the matter by Board members was welcome.
82. On Ukraine the regional director highlighted WFP's involvement in the inter-agency convoys bringing assistance to the frontlines, noting that as access might be cut off in the near future WFP had distributed double rations in certain areas. She also reported on joint demining efforts with FAO in close coordination with the Government of Ukraine.
83. Regarding WFP's work with international financial institutions, the regional director reported that most such work in the region was currently with the World Bank on matters such as food security and poverty data analysis, cash transfers and national social protection programmes. In addition, and in some countries, WFP and the World Bank were jointly working to identify opportunities for collaboration on climate change and food systems activities.

### **Special address by the United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director**

84. Addressing the Board from Nairobi, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) spoke of a "triple planetary crisis" driven by climate change; nature and biodiversity loss; and pollution, chemicals and waste. On climate change she warned that the window for avoiding a rise of 1.5°C in global temperatures was rapidly closing. Many humanitarian crises were caused or intensified by climate change and would

become far worse in the future unless robust action was taken to reverse greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, water scarcity was increasing due to climate change, pollution and unsustainable consumption and production. An estimated 6 billion people were expected to face water scarcity by 2050, with likely consequences for population displacement, peace and food security. Investment in human and planetary resilience was vital to counteract these multiple threats. She highlighted three key areas behind which WFP and UNEP could unite.

85. The first such area was resilience and adaptation through investments in nature-based solutions and early warning systems. UNEP and WFP were supporting vulnerable communities to facilitate their access to climate information and forecasting systems. That, coupled with local adaptation strategies such as crop diversification, water harvesting and grassland restoration, was helping communities to build resilience. WFP and UNEP had joint projects under way in a number of countries. In South Sudan they were building community resilience through nature-based solutions, developing Green Climate Fund proposals to enhance integrated land and water resource management. In Lesotho they were supporting access to climate information and forecasting systems for vulnerable communities and promoting local adaptation strategies such as crop diversification, water harvesting and grassland restoration. By working together on identifying common programmes, sharing tools and science and co-mobilizing resources, UNEP and WFP could bring such projects to scale.
86. Second, in the area of nature-positive and climate-friendly food systems, UNEP was developing agroecological approaches that worked with nature to support resilient and genetically diverse crops, livestock and soil microbes. To combat food losses, UNEP, WFP and other partners were working towards the widespread adoption of energy-efficient and climate-friendly cold chains. By collaborating on country food systems reviews, and working with the finance sector, donors and private partners to finance nature-positive food systems, UNEP and WFP could steer food systems in the right direction.
87. Third, on integrated water resource management, UNEP and WFP could take such work to scale to reach more people and ecosystems by rolling out water monitoring and management tools to ensure that they were captured in WFP's climate adaptive food system transformation or by integrating common social and environmental resilience and safeguards into the work of United Nations country teams.
88. In closing, the Executive Director emphasized the positive impact that WFP and UNEP could have by working together to support vulnerable populations in addressing nature-induced conflicts and natural disasters and maintaining healthy, productive and resilient ecosystems. Working synergistically, WFP offered its huge in-country presence and operational capacity and UNEP offered its expertise on science, environment, climate, pollution, biodiversity and nature-centred solutions. Delivering on their respective mandates, the two organizations could play a key role in reducing the threat of humanitarian emergencies and tackling the triple planetary crisis along the food, energy and water nexus.
89. Two Board members took the floor to deliver statements on behalf of their lists. Saying that the mandates of WFP and UNEP were interconnected, one asked where the collaboration between the two organizations could be strengthened in the coming five years and what opportunities there might be for better integration of environmental considerations and climate-sensitive approaches into emergency humanitarian response, particularly in the light of funding constraints. He also invited the Executive Director to say more on UNEP's approach to building resilience, the scope for further collaboration with WFP on resilience beyond drought response and how UNEP-WFP collaboration could contribute to more gender responsive and gender equitable outcomes.

90. Another list representative underscored the importance of preserving biodiversity and protecting the environment, praising the Great Green Wall as a project that had achieved a positive impact on habitats and food security. Her list encouraged WFP and UNEP to continue to work together, particularly in Africa, to support national efforts to achieve the SDGs and tackle multiple emergencies driven by climate change, biodiversity loss and water scarcity. She also called on the international community to support a fair energy transition for Africa and urged all United Nations bodies to work together to reduce duplication of effort in line with their respective mandates.
91. Speaking in his national capacity, one Board member said that United Nations bodies should harness the synergies offered by their comparative advantages, follow evidence and ensure that food production models respected local circumstances, traditions and preferences.
92. Responding to the comments and questions, the Executive Director of UNEP identified climate change adaptation as an important crossover area for UNEP and WFP. Climate-resilient crops were key to future food security, as was sustainable water management. Through its food for work and cash for work programming, WFP could make a critical contribution to the latter.
93. On comparative advantages, the Executive Director emphasized that UNEP and WFP were governed by their respective governing bodies. In contrast to WFP, UNEP was a science-based organization that used tools, analysis and standards to promote nature-based solutions, climate adaptation and environmental protection. WFP had a very effective country presence, meaning it could gather lessons learned in the field and relay them to UNEP, which in turn could share the most up-to-date science with WFP to inform its operations.
94. In its mandated role to work on climate security, UNEP identified stress factors related to climate change, which included a potential increase in the frequency and severity of humanitarian crises. Disaster risk reduction, preparedness and prevention were therefore key areas to strengthen, including through investment in resilience building to enable communities to better withstand climate shocks.
95. On the question of limited resources the Executive Director said that as nature was the strongest contender for absorbing the climate impacts that would occur in the coming years, investment in healthy ecosystems was a powerful way to reduce the impact of climate-driven shocks and better enable countries to manage their consequences such as drought and flooding. Investment in reforestation and land rehabilitation, for example, could reduce future need for food assistance by improving community resilience in the face of drought.
96. Regarding gender equality she noted that women were often disproportionately dependent on nature in fragile and conflict-affected communities as they sought to provide food and cooking fuel for their families. Women also constituted the majority of the agricultural workforce in developing countries and were therefore more exposed to chemicals and extreme weather. It was therefore vital to work together on women's empowerment as a means to build community resilience.
97. On the interdependence of food security, biodiversity and community resilience, the Executive Director highlighted the close collaboration between UNEP, the African Union and the African Union Commission to ensure that programmes were interlinked. It was important to work with ministries such as those responsible for agriculture, infrastructure and industry as well as those dedicated to environmental protection because many human activities had an impact on the environment.



98. Thanking the Executive Director for her address, the WFP Executive Director echoed her comments on the importance of strategic partnerships and highlighted WFP's extensive contribution to land rehabilitation through its programming, particularly in the Sahel.

## **Regional overviews (continued)**

### **Asia and the Pacific portfolio**

99. The Regional Director for the Asia and the Pacific region highlighted the achievements of WFP and challenges faced in the region in 2022, when the organization had assisted over 37 million people. Beyond its humanitarian work, progress had been made in its long-term development portfolio in transferring school feeding programmes to national bodies in Cambodia and Nepal; boosting self-reliance through setting up beneficiaries in micro and small enterprises in Bangladesh, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Philippines and Tajikistan; and supporting evidence-based decision making for governments in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines.
100. However, the region had also witnessed violent setbacks, cataclysmic flooding in Pakistan and intense pressure on the poorest households from high food and fuel prices and persistent economic adversity. In Afghanistan WFP had achieved positive results through engagement with local authorities on allowing women to return to work for NGOs; women were able to continue to work on food distribution and resilience building activities in more than half of the provinces. In response to the enduring risks faced by women, WFP had increased safeguarding at its distribution sites and stepped up communication on the free and unconditional nature of its assistance. All WFP work in Afghanistan was fully in line with guidance issued by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.
101. Operations in Afghanistan faced other challenges, with a rise in terrorist attacks and direct threats to United Nations entities. A funding shortfall of USD 1.5 billion for 2023 seriously undermined the sustainability of assistance, including rations for populations already in IPC phase 4. While the continued attacks on women's rights posed a major dilemma for the international community, it was vital to continue to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan to alleviate dire food insecurity.
102. In Myanmar conflict had intensified, and one in three citizens was expected to require humanitarian assistance in 2023. Although WFP had reached 2.8 million people in 2022, 67 townships remained inaccessible due to violence and bureaucratic delays, meaning hundreds of thousands of conflict-affected people were out of reach. Together with other humanitarian actors, WFP continued to advocate unfettered access to those in need.
103. In Cox's Bazar WFP's highly progressive refugee operations were under threat from funding shortfalls, which if not ameliorated would require rations to be cut beginning in March. With almost no income generation options, refugees were wholly dependent on assistance. Malnutrition rates were rising and there was evidence of increased criminal activity, including human smuggling; continued assistance was vital to prevent the desperate situation in the camps from getting even worse.
104. The impact of the 2022 floods continued to be felt in parts of Pakistan, where thanks to generous donor support WFP had been able to reach 3.3 million of those worst hit by the disaster. Livelihoods had been seriously undermined, with many households losing livestock and other productive assets and facing soaring debt. Over 5 million people were in IPC phase 4, and the repercussions of the disaster for food security were visible in growing rates of acute malnutrition.

105. Despite record donor support WFP faced unprecedented funding gaps in the region. The organization would continue to seek efficiency gains wherever possible and to expand its donor base, providing all transparency and information required to boost international advocacy for the most vulnerable populations.
106. Board members commended WFP for its life-saving operations in Asia and the Pacific. Many expressed grave concern at the situation faced by women in Afghanistan and observed that women's involvement in the distribution of humanitarian assistance was vital to ensuring that it reached the most vulnerable. One Board member called on WFP to suspend operations if assistance could not be provided in a safe and accountable manner; another said that food and livelihood assistance should only be provided in areas where women were able to continue to work.
107. One Board member asked whether WFP had resorted to using male-only distribution teams in some areas of the country. He also sought more details regarding the safeguarding measures in place and efforts to ensure that assistance reached the most vulnerable people. One observer delegation called on the international community to lift sanctions on Afghanistan, unfreeze Afghan assets held abroad and support the reconstruction of the banking system in order to promote national and regional stability.
108. Turning to the challenges faced in Cox's Bazar, Board members encouraged WFP to take all possible steps to mitigate the imminent pipeline break; members also called for advocacy with the Government of Bangladesh on livelihood options for the refugees and the use of vulnerability-based targeting. One Board member asked how WFP was working with its implementing partners and donors to address access issues in Myanmar.
109. Further details were also sought regarding WFP's efforts to coordinate with other actors in Pakistan on food security and nutrition monitoring, including for the next IPC report. One Board member asked how recent economic recovery was affecting WFP operations in Asia as a whole and whether CBTs could be expanded in the region.
110. Responding to the comments and questions the regional director reiterated the critical importance of continued humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, where 20 million people were food insecure and 4 million faced acute malnutrition. WFP was clear that having women meaningfully involved in all stages of its programming was essential; almost all cooperating partners agreed that local-level agreements were the best way forward in the current situation.
111. WFP's commitment to principles of safe access and zero tolerance for interference in its operations was unwavering. In extreme cases assistance would be suspended, as had occurred in Kabul, Kandahar and Ghor. WFP was not using male-only distribution teams because women were still able to work for United Nations entities; in fact, WFP was increasing the participation of women at distribution points and in the operation of its complaints hotline as part of its safeguarding measures.
112. In the 16 provinces where women were not able to work for NGOs some cooperating partners were choosing to continue with all-male teams; others had suspended their activities, but WFP was continuing to pay their fixed costs to ensure that they were able to remain in Afghanistan and keep their female employees on their payrolls. On risk mitigation, the regional director highlighted the expansion of community outreach through local food assistance committees and health centres, increased radio broadcasts and more signage at distribution points. In areas of particular risk to women, distributions were made to men and women on different days, using different queues and even separate locations.

113. WFP had cut costs in Cox's Bazar, changing how it provided nutrition services with UNICEF and UNHCR. Two food outlets had been closed and WFP staff had been reduced by 20 percent. Operations required USD 125 million in 2023 if full rations were to be provided, while USD 80 million would allow WFP to provide rations cut by 17 percent for the remainder of the year. Assistance was being prioritized and nutrition programmes would be protected from cuts.
114. In Myanmar access issues were complex. A heroic network of small community-based organizations and NGOs was finding every possible way of reaching those in need but assistance was being delivered in a piecemeal fashion and at extremely high risk to those on the ground.
115. WFP conducted regular food security updates in Pakistan, including by contributing to the IPC; further information on the status of the next IPC report would be provided bilaterally. The Government of Pakistan had provided an excellent response to the floods through its social protection system and an effective prioritization system targeting the bottom 40 percent of the population with assistance, which WFP hoped would be sustained.
116. Regarding economic recovery, fertilizer supplies were stabilizing, inflation was receding in some countries and good rice harvests had been predicted for 2023; nonetheless, recovery was uneven and social protection systems and WFP operations would continue to play key roles in some countries. Despite the various crises of recent years WFP had not suspended resilience building activities in the region, even in conflict settings such as in Myanmar and Afghanistan.

### **Eastern Africa portfolio**

117. In his overview of the region the Regional Director for Eastern Africa reported that an estimated 78 million people were acutely food insecure, a 34 percent increase from 2021. The convergence of multiple crises such as climate change, conflict, COVID-19 and rising costs had continued to drive food insecurity, with particularly dire consequences for populations in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan.
118. WFP had reached 43.5 million people in 2022, meeting immediate humanitarian needs and averting famine. CBTs and funding from international financial institutions to support development had risen substantially. WFP had procured 27 percent of all food assistance from local and regional markets. During 2023 the organization planned to maintain its strong humanitarian response while also exploring ways to build resilience through its operations, taking an integrated food systems approach that considered the impact of climate change.
119. Despite record funding in 2022 needs in the region continued to outstrip resources. The Horn of Africa had entered its sixth consecutive failed rainy season, and the number of people driven into acute food insecurity by drought currently exceeded 23 million.
120. In Ethiopia drought conditions were worsening in the north, where an estimated 11.8 million people required assistance. Meanwhile, conflict continued to affect communities in Afar, Amhara and Tigray. Thanks to the resumption of basic services following the signing of a peace agreement between the Federal Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, WFP was able to conduct food security assessments and humanitarian organizations were able to operate more easily.
121. In Somalia famine had been averted in 2022 but the risk of famine persisted and could only be countered by continued humanitarian assistance at scale. Even so, the increased resilience of the population compared to 2011 – when famine had been declared following just two failed rainy seasons and 260,000 people had died as a result of drought – was testament to the positive impact of investments in early warning, shock-responsive social protection systems and resilience building initiatives.

122. In South Sudan four consecutive years of flooding had displaced over 1 million people, and an estimated 60 percent of the population required humanitarian assistance. Insecurity and attacks on humanitarian actors had increased and funding was needed to pre-position stocks ahead of the rainy season; pre-positioning would obviate the need to use helicopters to deliver food, thus saving up to USD 50 million. The international community was urged to remain engaged in political and conflict prevention efforts in South Sudan.
123. Across the region WFP was working with local NGOs to build their capacity and was collaborating with UNEP on climate-sensitive activities and water resource management. Resilience building was a priority for WFP and governments in the region working to create a better future for their populations and end the need for humanitarian assistance.
124. Board members commended WFP for its life-saving assistance, including its success in averting famine in Somalia, and expressed support for its continuing efforts to secure humanitarian access. Speaking on behalf of his list, one Board member welcomed WFP's cooperation and consultation with governments. He urged donors and other actors to pay special attention to the region and called for more emphasis on projects to protect natural resources and support sustainable livelihoods.
125. Speaking in his national capacity another Board member asked WFP to provide more information on its funding strategy for the Horn of Africa. He urged WFP to prioritize assistance to populations in IPC phases 4 and 5 and strengthen needs-based targeting. He also encouraged WFP to be proactive and transparent on the results of its investigation of fraud in Uganda, adding that it should implement biometric registration and work with UNHCR and the joint targeting hub to prioritize assistance to the most vulnerable refugees. He requested more information about operations in the Sudan and WFP plans for collaboration with the World Bank.
126. Another Board member called for greater flexible funding, saying that it allowed WFP to respond to urgent need in an efficient and agile way. Several Board members encouraged WFP to continue to address the root causes of food insecurity and to work to build resilience, including through local procurement and partnerships such as with UNICEF on strengthening social cohesion and with private sector entities on innovation and technology. One Board member remarked on the value of a food systems approach to ensuring that interventions were integrated, especially for drought-affected populations.
127. Board members expressed grave concern at the funding challenges for WFP activities in South Sudan, with one noting that rations had already been cut for people in IPC phases 4 and 5 and urging other donors to step up their support. Another Board member highlighted alarming protection violations, particularly against women and girls, and called on all actors to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, adding that WFP should work with the United Nations country team to ensure that all allegations were investigated thoroughly.
128. Turning to Ethiopia Board members said that they were encouraged by the peace agreement, improved access and WFP's success in reaching 85 percent of targeted beneficiaries in Afar and Amhara. They were very concerned, however, at the continued threat of famine in Somalia and recommended that WFP work with other actors in a coordinated humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach to address the root causes of vulnerability.
129. The regional director thanked Board members for their support. On the funding strategy he explained that each country office had a partnership strategy that mapped out likely donors, issues of interest and opportunities for engagement. The regional bureau was undertaking a similar exercise and the regional director was visiting capitals with a special focus on emerging donors in order to make the case for increased investment in East Africa through WFP. International financial institutions were increasingly involved, channelling money often from host governments to WFP for the implementation of projects. WFP was also investing

heavily in capacity building for line ministries to facilitate the handover of projects to governments.

130. Turning to South Sudan the regional director recognized that prioritization was a major challenge as WFP was already struggling to cover the minimum food needs of populations in IPC phases 4 and 5; the organization continued to engage with donors to address funding shortfalls. Across the region there were 4.7 million refugees, very few of whom were receiving full rations. Given that on average refugees spent more than 17 years displaced, there was a need to consider how best to manage long-term refugee populations. One option was to move from an encampment model to a settlement model, as seen in Uganda and recently introduced in Kenya, which allowed refugees to become small-scale farmers whose livelihoods could be supported by WFP working with UNHCR and host governments.
131. On Uganda the regional director recalled that WFP had been the first to identify the potential fraud; the Government had responded quickly, and WFP was looking at how to work with the Government and UNHCR on biometric registration.
132. WFP was committed to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, providing training across the region and regularly engaging with staff to reinforce its zero tolerance policy. The organization would take all steps to respond effectively to allegations, including by reporting concerns to internal and external authorities.
133. On the partnership with UNEP the regional director highlighted projects in South Sudan, where WFP had offered to house a UNEP staff member at its office in order to deepen collaboration. In Kenya, joint work in water resource management and land reclamation was under way. The regional bureau planned to share its experience with the partnership with other parts of WFP in Africa and beyond; WFP hoped to consolidate the partnership through a memorandum of understanding but in the meantime collaboration would continue and the Board would be kept apprised of developments.

### **Southern Africa portfolio**

134. The Regional Director for the Southern Africa region updated the Board on cyclone Freddy, which had moved from Madagascar to Mozambique, destroying homes and livelihoods. Working with the governments concerned WFP was tracking the cyclone and had pre-positioned staff, food and logistics equipment for immediate deployment along its predicted path.
135. Throughout the region deepening food insecurity had forced 60 million people, mostly women and children, into hunger. The high cost of inputs and a lack of fertilizer caused by the conflict in Ukraine had delayed the current planting season and, combined with the threat of further floods and cyclones, was creating a bleak outlook for the next harvest. In addition an electricity crisis in South Africa was affecting economic activity across the region.
136. In 2022 WFP had reached 16.5 million people in Southern Africa, including 3 million with nutrition programmes, 1.6 million with resilience-building activities and 9 million with unconditional CBTs provided mainly as emergency assistance. Areas of particular concern included the food security situation in northern Mozambique and recurrent climate shocks, including two cyclones in Madagascar over the past year and the worst flooding in 20 years in Zambia. The Regional Director commended the governments of those and other countries in the region for their leadership in working to mitigate the effects of recent floods and cyclones.
137. Conflict, poor harvests and other challenges had left 26 million people food-insecure in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where most WFP food assistance was being provided in kind. A recent shooting involving a UNHAS flight near Goma had resulted in no casualties but flights – which were the only means of reaching many areas of that country – had been suspended, worsening the crisis faced by many people. WFP was providing life-saving

- support for approximately 500,000 refugees in other countries of the region, but funding difficulties had forced it to cut rations by between 50 and 80 percent.
138. Throughout the region WFP was building partnerships with a view to transforming the agriculture sector through programmes aimed at enhancing food systems, increasing household incomes, achieving sustainable food security and contributing to the region's economic growth. Examples included efforts to increase the participation of young people and the use of digital technologies, with FAO and others; the piloting of a water-energy-food nexus approach involving the use of solar-powered energy to pump underground water for drinking and small-scale irrigation with the Government of Madagascar; the use of satellite data and advanced analytics for early warning and reduced disaster risks with the African Risk Capacity Group and IBM; the development of food systems, including through greater participation of women and young people in agricultural value chains, with the African Export-Import Bank and the African Continental Free Trade Area secretariat to support smallholder farmers in Africa; sustainable agricultural production with the other Rome-based agencies; and a joint programme with FAO, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA)-New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) aimed at implementing African Union and SADC decisions and declarations on food security and developing indigenous and organic food production and related agrifood chains, including through work with the private sector.
  139. Appealing for donors' continuing support for WFP programmes in the region, the regional director said that WFP expected to reach about 70 million people over the coming months but that the number could increase in response to cyclones and floods. With a funding shortfall of USD 465 million for the following six months, WFP was investing in innovative financing mechanisms and had established a dedicated unit at the regional bureau to work with country offices on strengthening their capacity for strategic partnerships, innovative development financing and access to climate financing.
  140. Board members, including one speaking on behalf of a list, praised WFP for its flexibility in responding to emerging and sudden-onset needs and the collaborative and consultative approach it took to the formulation of development programmes in line with government priorities. They thanked the regional director for his update on cyclone Freddy and welcomed WFP's anticipatory action, monitoring and engagement with host governments during the preparation for and response to the cyclone.
  141. A number of Board members expressed support for WFP's partnerships in the region, mentioning in particular those with AUDA-NEPAD and SADC and with UNHCR. They encouraged WFP to expand its work on rapid rural transformation and the development of organic and indigenous crop production, particularly given the increasing cost of fertilizer and other inputs and the potential value of such farming techniques in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts; to sustain its work on improving communications, transparency and oversight, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and to accelerate the switch from blanket assistance to vulnerability-based targeting, as in Cabo Delgado in Mozambique.
  142. Members sought additional information on humanitarian access and the safety and security of WFP beneficiaries, staff and partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; outbreaks of cholera occurring in certain countries; and the effect of the electricity crisis in South Africa on WFP activities.
  143. The regional director took note of Board members' recommendations and undertook to continue to update the Board on the partnership with AUDA-NEPAD and SADC. He said that the Government of Mozambique was supporting WFP's switch to vulnerability-based targeting and WFP was monitoring the cholera risk, particularly in countries affected by

flooding. As South Africa was the powerhouse of the region the current electricity crisis was hindering industry and agriculture and leading to a loss of jobs, and it was not yet clear how it would be resolved.

## Policy issues

### 2023/EB.1/2 WFP aviation policy

144. The Chief of the Aviation Service presented the WFP aviation policy. Incorporating feedback provided by Board members at three informal consultations, the policy adhered to the standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Aviation Standards for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Air Transport Operations and all relevant national civil aviation regulations.
145. Four Board members, including three speaking on behalf of their lists or other country groupings, and one observer took the floor to express support for the policy and commend the pilots and crews providing critical services in often very difficult circumstances. Recent crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict in many parts of the world had demonstrated the importance of air transport in providing humanitarian access to hard-to-reach areas, including during rapid responses to emergencies.
146. Turning to specific aspects of the policy, Board members welcomed efforts to strengthen environmental sustainability and reduce environmental impact, which one member said was in line with the “do-no-harm” principle and could result in long-term cost savings. Members also expressed support for the policy’s commitment to enhancing partnerships, reinforcing humanitarian principles, ensuring disability inclusion and enforcing a “zero tolerance” policy with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, with one member asking how WFP would encourage its partners and others in the wider community to likewise work towards those aims. Members also said that the implementation of a transparent, secure online system for reporting on the passengers and cargo carried by WFP-operated flights would reduce the risk of fraud and corruption and enhance confidence in the Aviation Service.
147. Welcoming the plans to strengthen regional and national aviation systems and capacity, members stressed the need to enhance security standards and develop safety and risk management procedures for fragile settings. They requested additional information on the capacity and resilience building work that WFP planned to implement as part of those and other efforts aimed at fostering emergency preparedness and agility. Board members encouraged WFP to continue to pursue dialogue, coordination and partnerships with international aviation bodies and other providers of humanitarian air services and to explore the links between WFP preparedness strategies and those of other United Nations entities in the countries where they operated.
148. Board members also welcomed the planned adoption of a cost-recovery funding model for the service, saying that they looked forward to reviewing draft guidelines on how country steering committees should set and apply service fees for user groups that would allow smaller and local partners to pay lower fees for WFP air services than those paid by large international partners.
149. One speaker said that the members of his list would approve the policy despite the absence of a costed implementation plan because WFP management had indicated that no additional work or funding would be required for its implementation. Board members requested an update on the implementation of the aviation policy at the Board’s first regular session in 2024.

150. Responding to the points raised, the Chief of the Aviation Service said that partners' conformity with WFP policies on disability inclusion and zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse was monitored by vendor vetting committees using the service's own procedures and guidelines. Ongoing development of the United Nations booking hub as a platform for booking WFP-managed aviation services included the establishment of an online system for reporting on the passengers and freight carried. A draft of WFP's plans for formulating and implementing a centralized funding mechanism would be presented to the Board before its next session. Most aspects of the policy had already been operationalized, apart from the setting of specific rates for local NGOs.
151. Thanking Board members for their contributions to the formulation of the policy, and the Secretary of the Board for guiding the process, the acting Deputy Executive Director said that the annual report on the activities of the Aviation Service would include the full set of indicators used to measure performance and effectiveness. In response to a question from an observer, he said that the Aviation Service engaged with the national authorities and the relevant national and international civil aviation authorities in all of the countries where it operated.

## **Latin America and the Caribbean portfolio**

### **2023/EB.1/3      Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela interim country strategic plan (2023–2025)**

152. The Country Director for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela presented the interim country strategic plan (CSP) for that country for 2023–2025, saying that it was designed to contribute to food security and nutrition in line with government priorities. The focus was on school meals to promote community food security, support the transition from emergency response to resilience and strengthen the country's capacity to develop sustainable pathways for economic recovery. The design of the CSP had been informed by consultations with stakeholders, and the plan's four outcomes were aligned with national priorities and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework.
153. Board members broadly endorsed the interim CSP, with its food and nutrition focus and nexus approach combining food assistance with activities aimed at improving local food systems, including by making them more climate resilient. Many mentioned the centrality of the school feeding programme as an important feature of the plan. Other positive aspects highlighted included the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment; provisions for targeting based on vulnerability; and prioritization of people affected by natural disasters.
154. One Board member urged WFP also to prioritize pregnant and lactating women and children younger than school-age and another member asked for additional information on activities outside the school system aimed at ensuring that other vulnerable food-insecure groups received food and nutrition assistance.
155. One Board member, noting challenges related to food availability and access in the country, called on WFP to devote more effort to strengthening logistical and supply chains at the national and international levels to ensure affordable prices in local food markets.
156. The country director thanked the Board members for their encouragement and endorsement. Regarding food security activities outside the school system she explained that schools would serve as the primary platform for work to connect smallholder farmers to markets and to promote the resilience of communities, reflecting a more integrated approach to food security and nutrition.



157. The Director General of the Office of Multilateral Affairs for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela praised the interim CSP as a consensual document that was well aligned with the national priorities enshrined in the national constitution and with the national *Plan de la Patria*. Under the interim CSP WFP would support and complement social programmes already being implemented in the country with the aim of promoting economic and social development to improve living and production standards.

### Evaluation reports

#### **2023/EB.1/4          Summary report on the strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS and management response**

158. The acting Director of Evaluation presented the results of the strategic evaluation of WFP's work on nutrition and HIV/AIDS, which had examined the quality and results of the related policies and situated WFP's work in nutrition and HIV/AIDS within the new strategic plan, particularly as it related to meeting urgent food and nutrition needs and applying integrated approaches to nutrition.
159. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, added that the evaluation highlighted WFP's ability to scale up its nutrition operations and the progress made in integrating nutrition throughout the WFP portfolio as a key cross-cutting priority of the strategic plan. It also showed that HIV was a critical issue for WFP in its commitment to supporting the most vulnerable people and reaching those left furthest behind. Management would implement the six recommendations stemming from the evaluation and commit to act on and lead the integration of nutrition throughout WFP.
160. The recommendations arising from the evaluation called for WFP to have an internal dialogue aimed at developing clear guidance on integrating nutrition into programming; to articulate a clear and comprehensive approach to nutrition integration; to continue to enhance related capacity across the entire organization in order to enhance expertise and approaches and to ensure nutrition integration through matching skills to context and programme aims; to equip the knowledge management team in the Nutrition Division to work across units; and to build on partnerships by nurturing long-term relationships aimed at delivering long-term gains in HIV and nutrition.
161. The Director, Nutrition Division, presented the management response to the evaluation and the proposed actions for implementing the six recommendations, assuring the Board that WFP was committed to maximizing its contribution to nutrition. The Director emphasized the need going forward for WFP to work hand-in-hand with its partners to promote the quality and complementarity of its work on nutrition and HIV programming, policies and governance.
162. One Board member delivered a cross-list statement, speaking on behalf of all five lists, which he said reflected the importance that the entirety of the Board attached to nutrition and the significance of WFP's work on both the prevention and treatment of malnutrition across the world. Welcoming the strategic evaluation, the progress made on health and nutrition approaches and the work carried out to ensure that WFP's nutrition policy remained relevant, he said that there was a lack of funding for the implementation of long-term nutrition-sensitive programming and of tools and capacity to deliver better nutrition outcomes across WFP. The Board was of the view that WFP needed to develop and implement a strategy for the effective integration of nutrition throughout the organization and it strongly advised senior management to take ownership of that process. It also strongly encouraged WFP to further strengthen its partnerships and its distribution of tasks, in particular with FAO, IFAD, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO). Finally, it urged stakeholders to act on their financial commitments made at the 2021 Nutrition for Growth Summit in order to reach the level of support needed to end malnutrition.

163. Other Board members emphasized points of particular importance to their countries. Several said that funding for nutrition and HIV/AIDS work was inadequate, with one suggesting that the Nutrition Division prepare a fundraising plan. One recommended that in future programme and policy documents WFP explain how it planned to build operational capacity for nutrition, particularly at the subnational level. She also recommended that gender equality and inclusion be mainstreamed into programme design through properly supported human resource capacity and consistent use of evidence from monitoring.
164. Several members and one observer voiced support for the use of cross-list statements to communicate the Executive Board's perspective, particularly on core issues such as nutrition.
165. The Director, Nutrition Division, thanked the Board for its unified response and welcomed the comments on management's response to the recommendations. She added that as WFP rolled out its gender policy there would be considerable opportunity to strengthen the cross-analysis of gender and nutrition through programming, using examples such as WFP's work on gender-responsive social protection in Ghana and the analysis undertaken through the Fill the Nutrient Gap tool. She assured the Board that management took the challenge of developing capacity throughout the organization very seriously and would continue to work closely with its United Nations partners on strengthening WFP's role in improving access to healthy diets in the world's most fragile settings.

**2023/EB.1/5          Summary report on the evaluation of the policy on WFP's role in peacebuilding in transition settings and management response**

166. The acting Director of Evaluation presented the results of the evaluation of WFP's 2013 policy on the organization's role in peacebuilding in transition settings, which set out the parameters for its role in conflict, post-conflict and transition settings to ensure that it seized opportunities to contribute to peace and did not inadvertently contribute to conflict. The evaluation examined the quality and results of the policy and explanatory factors for the results. Owing to the prominence of the triple nexus discourse, renewed calls for aid actors to take a more active role in addressing root causes and the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize, the policy area was attracting more attention. In addition, the new strategic plan featured elements relating to the peacebuilding policy.
167. The recommendations resulting from the evaluation called on WFP to strengthen the analysis of the impact of WFP and its partners on conflict dynamics; to mainstream conflict sensitivity at WFP; and to support peace-building processes jointly with other actors.
168. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, said that management agreed with the finding that the policy remained relevant and valid. Noting that its implementation had been delayed by inadequate planning and resources, she said that since 2018 steps had been taken to build capacity for its implementation. That would continue, in particular to increase mainstreaming of the policy across the organization. She then proceeded to present management's response to the recommendations stemming from the evaluation.
169. Board members, including one speaking on behalf of a list, another speaking on behalf of all countries of a list except one and a third speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the evaluation report and management's response to its recommendations. They concurred with the finding that WFP's main contribution to peace was through its work on food insecurity, resilience building and livelihoods and noted, with some concern, the finding that WFP paid limited attention to how its presence and assistance might affect conflict and peace dynamics. Several members, including one speaking on behalf of all countries of a list except one, noted that systematic implementation of the policy had only recently begun, and one member said that it would be important for the Board to have more information on the modalities for implementation.

170. Many of those who spoke, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive programming were central to the do-no-harm approach.
171. Board members, including one speaking on behalf of a list, another on behalf of all the countries of a list except one and a third on behalf of a group of countries, recommended, among other things, that WFP define its contribution to peace, in dialogue with the Executive Board; enhance engagement with local partners; work in synergy with global processes within the United Nation system, particularly to enhance humanitarian access, without straying into other organizations' mandates; cooperate closely with United Nations peacekeeping operations when relevant; pay more attention to civil-military cooperation; contribute to peace based on information available in the system but make decisions guided by food security and nutrition objectives; continue to take into account risks and opportunities in all country operations facing conflict risks, remaining flexible in doing so; remain aligned with the humanitarian principles, in particular neutrality and impartiality; strengthen monitoring and evaluation, including by adding relevant indicators; go beyond doing no harm to contribute to building peace with due regard for its core mandate and means; consider partnering with peacebuilding actors, institutions and think tanks; and consider leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation to enhance implementation.
172. Board members, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the conflict sensitivity mainstreaming strategy to be developed should include provisions on conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive programming, a theory of change and an implementation plan, including systematic resourcing, staffing and specialized training strategies, cross-cutting themes such as gender and engagement with cooperating partners.
173. Additional information was sought on management's only partial agreement with one of the evaluation recommendations; WFP's capacity to assess how its presence and assistance might affect peace and conflict dynamics and to adapt programmes and processes accordingly; WFP's perspective on its role in negotiating access and potential challenges in relation to upholding humanitarian principles; and the timeline for the development of the conflict-sensitivity mainstreaming strategy.
174. Responding to the comments the acting Director of Evaluation began by talking about WFP's engagement and coordination with peacekeeping organizations, including in the context of WFP's peacekeeping operations, referring to a situation in one country mentioned in the evaluation that indicated that while currently rare such coordination was promising. Civil-military coordination had not been prioritized in the scope of the evaluation but could be covered in the conflict-sensitivity mainstreaming strategy.
175. On the topic of monitoring and evaluation to generate evidence and learning, she explained that the new corporate results framework would include a reference to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, leading to a growing body of information from monitoring undertaken by WFP. In addition, each CSP evaluation currently included a question on the nexus, and the Office of Evaluation was working with the other evaluation offices of the United Nation system to develop ways to assess progress on nexus work.
176. With regard to South-South and triangular cooperation, WFP's policy on the matter had been evaluated in 2021, generating a recommendation that the updated policy describe how WFP could contribute to South-South and triangular cooperation at the global, regional and country levels and across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
177. The Deputy Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, said that WFP could strengthen its focus on food security to make it more conflict-sensitive by working with partners. To address the gap in mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into the programming cycle at the country level, WFP would undertake a reflection process with a range of partners, including peacebuilding partners, to better understand the trends in

- conflict dynamics and thus improve its operations. In countries where peacebuilding and reconciliation were ongoing, WFP's role was complementary rather than competing, and it involved ensuring that humanitarian assistance remained a focus and not overstepping its mandate.
178. Finally, protection and accountability were critical to conflict sensitivity and were linked to gender considerations, including women's empowerment and women's inclusion. In the wake of the peacebuilding evaluation, WFP would focus on leveraging the actions taken to implement the protection and accountability policy, in particular with regard to the community engagement process.
  179. With regard to capacity, local organizations were important, as were regional bodies that provided information on regional dynamics and priorities, helping WFP to better understand its role in peace processes. The focus nevertheless remained on food security outcomes at the local level. WFP was also looking at monitoring beyond food security outcomes to determine whether it had made a positive contribution to peace. Two conflict-sensitivity indicators being piloted for the corporate results framework involved a process whereby WFP and local partners jointly assessed the risks to humanitarian operations, documented them and monitored mitigation measures. The plan was to mainstream the two indicators into the corporate results framework in 2024.
  180. As conflict sensitivity was embedded in protection and accountability in the new strategic plan, the informal consultation on the protection and accountability policy would provide an opportunity to update Board members on progress on conflict sensitivity work at the global and local levels.
  181. The Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, recalled that the evaluated policy had been formulated before WFP had learned certain techniques, particularly from the 2020 synthesis of evidence, and lessons from WFP policy evaluations. Going forward implementation would revolve around the conflict-sensitivity mainstreaming strategy, which had been tested in some very intense environments and was currently being finalized. Linking it to other policies, in particular those on gender, protection and accountability, and CBTs, was also a focus.
  182. Turning to comments on coordination within the United Nations system, he said that the common United Nations agenda formulated by the Secretary-General had a new agenda for peace that United Nations bodies were asked to advance in a coordinated fashion, and that agenda would inform how WFP engaged with the rest of the United Nations system in terms of programming. United Nations development system reform had also introduced common country analyses and cooperation frameworks, which would ensure a cross-pillar approach covering peace and human rights. WFP would be contributing to such analyses and aligning its work with them.
  183. WFP sometimes relied on peace and development advisors deployed by the United Nations Development Programme, but owing to limitations often had to supplement their work with its own expertise. WFP had also engaged with the Peacebuilding Support Office over the years and was aiming to establish a joint work plan with it. Most importantly, an integration review initiated in 2022 as part of United Nations development system reform would soon generate an integrated assessment and planning policy that would drive a more coherent approach in conflict and post-conflict situations involving United Nations system actors. Entities such as WFP and UNICEF had ensured that the policy would allow the necessary space for humanitarian principles and were satisfied with the policy. An update on United Nations development system reform would be provided at the annual session in June.

184. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, observing that peacebuilding was not limited to work on emergencies, recalled that the evaluation highlighted the relative immaturity of WFP's resilience and social protection work in terms of evaluating results, even though such work clearly strengthened WFP's contribution to peacebuilding. She confirmed that conflict sensitivity and conflict and context analysis were core to the work that WFP needed to do, the capacity it needed to build and the mainstreaming that needed to be done across the organization's functions. She undertook to consult the Bureau on how best to continue engagement with the Board on the mainstreaming strategy beyond the forthcoming informal consultation on protection and accountability.
185. She assured the Board that management was not aiming to build WFP's peacebuilding capacity but rather to build capacity to do the required analysis. To some extent that meant building on existing analytical capabilities in the Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division and in programmes, within the programme divisions, at the country level, but it also meant making that capacity strong across the organization.

**2023/EB.1/6            Synthesis of evidence and lessons on WFP's performance measurement and monitoring from centralized and decentralized evaluations (2018–2021) and management response**

186. The acting Director of Evaluation presented the synthesis of evidence and lessons on WFP's performance measurement and monitoring over the period from 2018 to 2021. The synthesis discussed evidence from 53 evaluations conducted across all regions between 2018 and 2021 to assess the adequacy of performance measurement, the effectiveness of monitoring systems and the credibility and use of monitoring data.
187. The recommendations arising from the evaluation, echoing those of the 2018 internal audit of monitoring at WFP, called for WFP to strengthen funding for the monitoring function and to better integrate the function into the programme cycle; to increase the use of qualitative data in order to better capture and learn from the organization's achievements; and to intensify its efforts to improve country office monitoring systems.
188. The Chief Economist and Director, Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division, said that management agreed with the four recommendations in the synthesis report and that they would facilitate the enhancement of WFP's monitoring functions and performance measurement.
189. Board members, including one speaking on behalf of a list, welcomed the synthesis and its findings and recommendations, saying that effective monitoring was critical to reporting and programming. They raised a number of concerns, including with regard to the findings on the quality of monitoring data, the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment indicators into monitoring frameworks and the use of qualitative data to measure and analyse achievements in the area of gender.
190. The under-resourcing of the monitoring function in particular was cited as a concern by nearly all who spoke, and the member speaking on behalf of a list said that enhancing capacity and resources would facilitate greater use of monitoring data for learning and programming. WFP was urged to ensure that cross-cutting functions such as monitoring and evaluation were adequately funded and appropriately staffed.
191. Board members encouraged WFP to harmonize data collection among countries; to continue to develop qualitative data, particularly in cross-cutting areas; to prioritize efforts to improve the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment indicators into monitoring frameworks; to improve knowledge management and better integrate monitoring into WFP's programme cycle; to ensure that programme teams had clear incentives for incorporating data and evidence into programming decisions; to set corporate

- standards for evidence and informed decision making; to present regular updates to the Board until recommended changes had been completed; and to evaluate the effectiveness of the advocacy, surveys and standard-setting approaches proposed by the Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division after one year of implementation, including by assessing their impact on the uptake of robust monitoring practices at the country level.
192. The acting Director of Evaluation addressed members' comments on staffing and resources for monitoring and evaluation, noting that the two functions were separate at the global and regional levels but often combined into one role at the country level. The Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division and the Office of Evaluation had been working together to ensure that staff with the most appropriate profiles were in place at the country level, and they were exploring ways to strengthen the evaluation capacity of monitoring staff and the monitoring capacity of evaluation staff. The funding for decentralized and impact evaluations in country offices often came from the same sources as the funding for monitoring, and there was a need to explore options for ring-fencing funding for research, analysis, assessments, monitoring and evaluation at the country-level.
  193. The Chief Economist and Director, Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division, said that the importance of monitoring for WFP was reflected in the more than 40 instances of the word "evidence" in the new strategic plan. He reported that management was pilot testing 68 new indicators currently not included in the corporate results framework. He also stressed the importance of identifying the cost of proper assessment, what was needed to do proper real time monitoring and which evaluations were necessary in order to provide a clear picture of WFP's work. What remained to be explored was how to ensure access to the resources needed for good-quality monitoring, including data collection and analysis, to support evaluations.
  194. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, said that funding had been a persistent issue and that WFP was committed to using the results of the synthesis to define the way forward. She reiterated that monitoring as well as implementation suffered when only a portion of the resources requested at the country level was provided. WFP would consider ring-fencing the funding for monitoring but needed to determine the potential trade-offs in doing so. She reported that the field monitoring team had recently been moved from the Management Department to the Programme and Policy Development Department, thus consolidating the field monitoring and assessment functions within the Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division, providing greater visibility of gaps and opportunities and enabling better use of teams in the field.

## **Western Africa portfolio**

### **Overview of evaluations of CSPs for countries in the Western Africa region**

195. The acting Director of Evaluation presented an overview of the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations of the CSPs for Chad, the Central African Republic, Mauritania and Nigeria, four Sahelian countries that faced similar challenges with regard to political instability, conflict, displacement, climate change, poverty, gender inequality and COVID-19.
196. All four evaluations had concluded that the CSPs were aligned with national policies and plans and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks for the countries at issue. The CSPs had focused on assisting the most food-insecure and malnourished populations and had allowed WFP to adapt programming in response to changing circumstances; funding shortfalls, however, had limited the organization's ability to respond fully to humanitarian needs and to implement several activities as planned.

197. Positive results had been recorded in the areas of malnutrition treatment, support for smallholder farmers, gender mainstreaming and the provision of logistics services to WFP partners. There was insufficient evidence on the impact of school meals activities on nutrition, and country capacity strengthening had been only partially implemented. Despite some progress, there was scope to improve gender-transformative programming, protection, and accountability to affected populations.
198. In conflict settings WFP had faced dilemmas related to full adherence to humanitarian principles, and more could have been done to explore partnerships at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and to improve the integration of conflict analysis into programming.
199. The timeliness and cost efficiency of operations had at times been hampered by supply chain issues, which were partly linked to the timeliness of funding contributions, but WFP had implemented measures to keep operational costs under control. Targeting was broadly satisfactory although exclusion errors were a risk in the move towards needs-based programming. The CSPs had been based on solid food security assessments but there had been a lack of risk analysis and an excess of optimism about the shift from humanitarian to development assistance. Funding increases had failed to keep pace with increasing need, and funding had been too inflexible, short-term and unpredictable to support efforts to address the root causes of food insecurity.
200. Turning to the evaluation recommendations, all four country offices had been advised to improve the integration and complementarity of activities; strengthen targeting and monitoring mechanisms to enhance the inclusion of vulnerable groups; continue to strive for gender-transformative results; and increase the promotion of protection and accountability based on context analysis.
201. For Nigeria, the Central African Republic and Chad, recommendations included maintaining a focus on humanitarian assistance while supporting partners in resilience building and reflecting on how best to adhere to humanitarian principles in conflict-affected areas. The Mauritania country office had been advised to increase its focus on strengthening adaptive social protection systems and integrating resilience activities and to review its strategy to assist refugees and host populations, ensuring greater community involvement.
202. The Regional Director for Western Africa highlighted the positive results recognized by the evaluations in emergency response and malnutrition treatment in all four countries. Progress had been made in operational timeliness thanks to an increase in cash transfers and use of the Global Commodity Management Facility, which also facilitated local procurement and shorter lead times.
203. He welcomed the findings on resilience building, school feeding and capacity strengthening, noting that the regional bureau had invested in enhancing capacity strengthening support for country offices. WFP worked closely with governments in the Sahel on social protection. The country offices in the Central African Republic and Nigeria had already begun to implement evaluation recommendations related to the integration and complementarity of activities and were paying particular attention to gender, protection, and accountability to affected populations. The regional bureau had also hired roving staff to support country offices with advice and training on conflict sensitivity and accountability to affected populations.
204. Noting that it was important that CSPs reflect local conditions, one Board member expressed appreciation for WFP activities related to climate change, nutrition and supply chains in all four countries and welcomed the evaluation findings and recommendations in those areas. He also highlighted the value of collaboration with other United Nations entities in building resilient communities. Other Board members stressed the importance of humanitarian assistance and access and the deterioration of food security due to conflict

and climate challenges, which were showing a concerning trend. School feeding was mentioned as vital in this context to ensure that children had access to nutritious food. Several Board members confirmed their continued support while also recommending that WFP diversify funding sources and explore opportunities with international financial institutions. To enhance programme implementation and evidence generation strong complementary partnerships with other agencies and academic institutions were key. A focus on strengthening local production by reducing imports and building resilience was also mentioned as vital for the region. A nexus approach could help reduce need over time.

**2023/EB.1/7 Summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for the Central African Republic (2018–2022) and management response**

**Central African Republic country strategic plan (2023–2027)**

205. Presenting the CSP for the Central African Republic for 2023–2027, the country director explained that it shifted WFP operations from emergency response to livelihood support with the aim of strengthening the resilience of communities in the country. The plan reflected national and United Nations priorities and the recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the interim CSP for 2018–2022. Recommendation 6.3, on tracking the funding of armed groups, had not been considered because it went beyond WFP's mandate.
206. Through five outcomes, the CSP aimed to save lives and promote long-term change in the places most affected by hunger, malnutrition, conflict and climate change. Emergency assistance would be prioritized for populations in IPC phase 4, and WFP would seek opportunities to contribute to peace by promoting social cohesion. Institutional capacity strengthening, conflict sensitivity, gender equality, protection and accountability to affected populations were other key components of the plan.
207. Speaking on behalf of his list one Board member welcomed WFP's work to meet the needs of crisis-affected populations in the Central African Republic, one of the least developed countries in the world. He praised the CSP's focus on emergency response, partnerships and activities designed to address the root causes of vulnerability.
208. Other Board members welcomed the CSP's increased mainstreaming of gender and its focus on resilience building and peace. Several members encouraged WFP to assess and strengthen its partnerships. Others highlighted efforts to improve monitoring and evaluation capacity and vulnerability-based targeting as priorities. One Board member said that operations should be as protection and conflict sensitive as possible; others called on WFP to prioritize the use of CBTs.
209. Board members sought more information on WFP plans to support peace building, the status of the simplified protocol for the treatment of acute malnutrition tested under the interim CSP and the feasibility of the balance between humanitarian assistance and development work envisaged under the new plan. One speaker questioned the relevance of evaluation recommendation 6.2 to WFP's mandate.
210. One Board member urged WFP to retain its focus on humanitarian response and to engage in resilience building only after careful context analysis showed that its impact would be likely to last.
211. Responding to concerns related to the balance of humanitarian and development work, the country director reported that the Government had regained control of the vast majority of the country following the 2021 conflict. Work was under way on a road map for peace and elections were planned for July. WFP believed that in that context, and given adequate funding, it would be able to gradually reduce the crisis response component of the CSP and focus more on addressing root causes.



212. The country office had already started to strengthen its in-house assessment, monitoring and evaluation capacity and had a dedicated social protection unit that supported its work on gender, protection and accountability to affected populations. Gender would be considered a cross-cutting objective of enabling work and the design and implementation of development projects. A conflict analysis had informed the strategic and programmatic approaches set out in the CSP.
213. On partnerships, WFP would plan to strengthen synergies and collaboration with other actors; the CSP had been designed to promote flexibility and complementarity with partners and to ensure sustainable change through early recovery and resilience building activities, with support for internally displaced persons and returnees.
214. With UNICEF, the Ministry of Health and Population and NGOs, WFP was conducting research on the simplified protocol for the treatment of acute malnutrition in children 6–59 months of age. Further details on the progress of the research would be shared with the technical focal points of Board members working in the country.
215. On the concerns raised about recommendation 6.2, the acting Director of Evaluation clarified that WFP management had accepted the recommendation, recognizing that it referred to a need to better integrate conflict dynamics into WFP analysis and programme design, which was highly relevant in the Central African Republic.
216. The regional director said that WFP would retain its focus on humanitarian response in the country while taking informed steps to increase resilience support where possible and reduce future needs. Working in synergy with partners was a priority for WFP, particularly for resilience building. On monitoring and evaluation, improvements were also being made at the regional level, particularly with regard to conflict analysis.
217. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, added that WFP headquarters would also support conflict analysis at the country level. The simplified protocol was not yet ready to be rolled out, but WFP was working closely with UNICEF and others to determine whether it could be used to address acute malnutrition rapidly.
218. Following the approval of the CSP the Prime Minister of the Central African Republic described ongoing work to reduce conflict and instability in his country. He welcomed the CSP and its emphasis on early recovery, productivity and food systems as means of reducing food insecurity and acute malnutrition that could contribute to government efforts to restore community assets and achieve lasting change.

**2023/EB.1/8          Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Nigeria (2019–2022) and management response**

**Nigeria country strategic plan (2023–2027)**

219. The Nigeria Country Director presented the CSP for that country for 2023–2027, saying that it would prioritize emergency food assistance and an expansion of operations to the northwest while laying the foundations for resilience building in line with the recommendations arising from the evaluation of the previous CSP. WFP would work with partners to improve access to hard-to-reach areas; continue to provide aviation, logistics and telecommunications services to the humanitarian community; expand malnutrition treatment and livelihoods support; adhere to humanitarian principles and address protection and gender concerns; strive to enhance vulnerability-based targeting and complaint and feedback mechanisms; engage in partnerships on women’s empowerment, climate change and protection; and reinforce its food systems approach in government capacity building activities.

220. Speaking on behalf of her list one Board member endorsed the multidimensional approach set out in the new CSP, noting that the plan had been developed in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and saying that it was well aligned with national priorities and the UNSDCF. She welcomed in particular components related to emergency response, livelihood support and monitoring and evaluation and the integration of nutrition, gender, climate change adaptation and protection throughout the plan.
221. Speaking on behalf of many members of his list another Board member commended WFP for scaling up operations in Nigeria, fostering strong partnerships, delivering timely assistance and conducting cost-efficient activities, but he voiced concern at the gap between the number of people in need and those assisted. He welcomed WFP's commitment to improving vulnerability-based targeting and monitoring and its decision to allocate 91 percent of the country portfolio budget to crisis response and asked for clarification on the division of nutrition-related activities under three CSP outcomes and how WFP planned to address reductions in its staff and field presence.
222. One Board member praised the integration of evaluation recommendations into the new CSP. He urged WFP to use gender, age and conflict analysis to inform the CSP and to include local communities in programme design and implementation. Expressing concern at the prevalence of moderate acute malnutrition, particularly among children, he welcomed plans to increase government capacity on the subject and to focus assistance on malnourished populations. He also expressed support for plans to open a WFP office in northwest Nigeria.
223. Several Board members urged full implementation of the evaluation recommendation on protection and accountability to affected populations, particularly with regard to vulnerable groups such as women returnees. Many said that they supported WFP efforts to reach populations in need in hard-to-reach areas, especially in the northeast.
224. One Board member welcomed WFP collaboration with UNHCR in the south, food for assets programmes and livelihoods support for vulnerable households and smallholder farmers. He said that technical support was key to helping smallholder farmers improve their incomes and nutrition status. Another Board member asked how WFP would adapt its CBT operations in the light of cash flow shortages to ensure that people did not resort to negative coping strategies. She also asked how WFP would prioritize assistance for operations in the northwest in the face of limited funding and urged it to engage in joint advocacy to increase government investment in social protection in crisis-affected areas. She welcomed the strong integration of gender considerations and gender analysis in the CSP and asked WFP to ensure adequate resources for related work.
225. Calling for greater integration of evaluation findings and recommendations in the CSP, one Board member asked how WFP planned to shift to an enabling role given the level of food insecurity. She questioned the division of CSP activities under CSP outcome 1 and the distribution of nutrition-related activities under several CSP outcomes, expressing concern that such an approach might be fragmented, and requested more information on planned emergency response activities, the pathway from emergency response to livelihoods support, WFP's partners for nutrition activities under CSP outcome 1 and the integration of the "do no harm" principle and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in the implementation of the CSP. She also asked how WFP would balance its adherence to the humanitarian principles with its humanitarian and development agenda, underscoring the importance that the organization be – and be perceived as – fully independent.
226. Responding to Board member questions the country director explained that real-time assessment systems would be used to guide decisions on assistance modalities. All the food distributed by WFP was locally purchased and, when possible, WFP sought to purchase food close to distribution points, which benefited local economies, encouraged production and

- raised the incomes of smallholder farmers. Operations would be scaled up during the lean season and scaled down afterwards, when resilience-building activities would be possible.
227. He agreed that the gap between the planned number of beneficiaries and the actual number was concerning. According to the humanitarian response plan there were 4.3 million people in urgent need of food assistance in the northeast; WFP would reach up to 2.1 million if its operations were fully scaled up, with the Government and partners reaching an additional 900,000. The prioritization of assistance was therefore vital, as up to 1.5 million people would not be targeted at all. The regional director reassured the Board that the issue of accountability to affected populations was of great importance to WFP which had invested significantly in strengthening its capacity over the previous few years. He invited Member States and partners to further advocate on facilitating access. He also clarified that the cadre harmonisé was being expanded progressively to cover the entire country, with a consequent increase in the number of people identified who were food insecure; while this information was useful to the Government, WFP continued to focus its operations on northern areas. The Board's support and engagement was very welcome, in particular with regard to WFP's plans to reach hard-to-reach areas.
228. The most recent data on malnutrition indicated a quadrupling of moderate acute malnutrition rates. WFP would prioritize the rollout of nutrition programming in the northeast. The urgency of need was clear, as almost 5,000 people were facing catastrophic food insecurity (IPC phase 5). There was great potential to build resilience by supporting agricultural production in the north, but life-saving operations had to take precedence for 2023; the CSP was designed to allow WFP to adapt as the situation changed.
229. Adherence to the humanitarian principles would be written into all agreements with partners, and relevant training would be provided. WFP would remain neutral and access states equitably based on vulnerability. The regional director added that accountability to affected populations was also a top priority at the regional level, with investment in capacity through training, the introduction of a regional community of practice and a pilot system for escalating complaints and feedback being tested in Nigeria.
230. The acting Director of Evaluation clarified that the evaluation had recommended that nutrition and resilience building activities be better coordinated to ensure that vulnerable people could fully participate in the latter while still receiving nutrition support. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, explained that nutrition-specific outcomes were grouped under CSP outcome 2; nutrition was also integrated across four of the five CSP outcomes, which was the approach advocated by WFP in its strategic plan.
231. The Deputy Executive Director said that the country office had been at the forefront of efforts to integrate conflict sensitivity and context analysis into programming and would continue to work to that end. Details on WFP's partnership with UNICEF and the role of WFP under the global action plan for wasting could be provided bilaterally; the organization had a continued role in moderate acute malnutrition treatment and the prevention of acute malnutrition.
232. She also observed that the detail of Board member comments suggested that the internal consultations and information shared on the portal had been insufficient in addressing Board member concerns. Saying that it was important to optimize the use of time during formal Board sessions, she suggested that the topic be addressed through the ongoing governance review.
233. Speaking after the approval of the CSP, the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development of the Government of Nigeria welcomed the approval of the CSP, which was aligned with national priorities and addressed the growing humanitarian crisis in Nigeria. His Government was committed to

facilitating the delivery of sustainable humanitarian assistance and improving access and would support the implementation of the CSP by systematically providing input, guidance and financial resources. He also praised the expertise of the staff of the WFP country office, which he hailed as a model for other country offices.

**2023/EB.1/9            Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Chad (2019–2023) and management response**

234. The acting Director of Evaluation presented the main findings of the evaluation of the CSP for Chad for 2019–2023. Resources, she reported, had not increased in proportion to needs, limiting WFP's ability to respond; partners viewed WFP as the main humanitarian actor in Chad; contextual risks had not been considered sufficiently in the design or implementation of interventions; WFP had maintained support throughout the COVID-19 emergency but the planned transition to a resilience-based approach had been delayed by the pandemic; cross-cutting issues were insufficiently integrated into CSP implementation; and analysis and targeting were weak. The five recommendations resulting from the evaluation related to strengthening dialogue with the Government and other partners, improving risk analysis, programming and communications, enhancing the flexibility of activities and their complementarity, better articulating cross-cutting approaches based on solid analysis and improving internal mechanisms for CSP implementation.
235. The country director outlined the country office's plans for implementing the recommendations and thanked the evaluation team for the evaluation and the Government and donors for their support for WFP's work in Chad.
236. Board members, including two speaking on behalf of their lists and other country groupings, welcomed the evaluation and response and praised WFP for its work in challenging circumstances in Chad, including its provision of humanitarian assistance in hard-to-reach areas and its contribution to sustainable solutions. They also highlighted the impact that climate change was having on vulnerable people's livelihoods in the Sahel and the good work being done in Chad to enhance the resilience of local populations in that challenging environment. A number of Board members expressed concern regarding the weaknesses the evaluation had found in WFP's efforts to address cross-cutting issues, in particular gender. Referring to the evaluation's finding that women and girls had received proportionately less assistance than men and boys, Board members urged WFP to implement the recommendation on formulating and implementing a gender action plan and to monitor and track progress towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. They requested future updates on the implementation and outcomes of the plan, including on the allocation of financial and human resources.
237. Board members also called for stronger mainstreaming of other cross-cutting themes such as protection, accountability to vulnerable populations and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and encouraged WFP to articulate approaches to those issues based on solid analysis. One member highlighted the ongoing efforts to address the impact of climate change in Chad and other Sahelian countries and the importance of providing farmers with climate and weather data and working with local, regional, and international actors.
238. Funding shortfalls and delays in the receipt of funding for WFP activities in Chad were another cause of concern. To mitigate this challenge, and the wider weaknesses identified in WFP's ability to respond to unforeseen crises (such as the COVID-19 pandemic and pipeline breaks), Board members recommended that WFP exploit its comparative advantage at the humanitarian–peace–development nexus to develop strategic partnerships with development and peace actors; strengthen its flexibility and planning to facilitate rapid response to changing circumstances; ensure good communications with all stakeholders on targeting decisions and the results of interventions, particularly

- when forced to reduce assistance; promote South–South cooperation in capacity- and resilience-building programmes; and strengthen coordination with other actors, especially other United Nations entities, with more joint programming, advocacy and fundraising.
239. Turning to the high staff turnover and other staffing challenges identified in the evaluation report, Board members asked for information on the steps taken to attract and maintain qualified national and international staff for effective programme implementation and continuity.
240. The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Chad took the floor to express her country's commitment to continuing to work with WFP, including on gender equality and women's empowerment and on capacity building. She called for further support from donors and requested that future evaluations report on the alignment of WFP interventions with the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework.
241. Responding to the points raised, the acting Director of Evaluation recalled that the evaluation included the recommendation that WFP better articulate its support for climate change mitigation. The country director said that WFP's response to climate shocks was being integrated into its lean season response; actions to address funding challenges were included in an action plan; and progress had already been made in accelerating the transition from humanitarian response to a resilience approach. Regarding gender and limited assistance to women and girls, he clarified that the latter was related to general funding shortages and school closure times. More recently over 52 percent of beneficiaries reached in schools were girls, compared to 48 percent in 2019. He also mentioned progress made in strengthening partnerships and acknowledged the difficulties in attracting and retaining talent in difficult circumstances.

**2023/EB.1/10      Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Mauritania (2019–2023) and management response**

242. The acting Director of Evaluation presented the summary report on the evaluation of the CSP for Mauritania for 2019–2023, which had found positive outcomes from many WFP activities including the use of cash in lean season support, the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition and food assistance for assets programmes. WFP had demonstrated a strong capacity for adaptation and flexibility, including during the COVID-19 response. It was working at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus with key partners to provide assistance to refugees and had made progress in addressing cross-cutting issues. Greater involvement of the Government and state institutions was required, however. Success factors had included internal reorganization, increased funding and improved monitoring. The five recommendations resulting from the evaluation pertained to strengthening the strategy for combining adaptive social protection with integrated resilience building; further strengthening the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues; reviewing the strategy for assisting refugee and host populations; strengthening the integrated resilience package; and enhancing national policy support for school feeding and the management of acute malnutrition.
243. The country director outlined the planned actions for implementing the recommendations, especially those under the next CSP, which was currently being prepared. She thanked the stakeholders involved in the evaluation, especially the Government, and the donors that had funded WFP's work in Mauritania.
244. Board members welcomed the report, which they said was informative and balanced. They praised WFP for its achievements under the CSP, in particular in supporting refugees and displaced people, facilitating humanitarian responses via UNHAS and providing strong leadership in adaptive social protection systems, in line with humanitarian principles. They encouraged WFP to implement the evaluation recommendations, in particular by expanding its strategic engagement in social protection with a view to strengthening the Government's

leadership of the social protection programme; enhancing sustainable ways to assist refugees and host communities; and strengthening WFP's positioning in capacity building, protection and ensuring humanitarian access. One member requested additional information on how WFP applied lessons and best practices from effective interventions in Mauritania in other operational settings. Another urged WFP to take into account donors' ongoing funding of WFP resilience-building and technical assistance activities when drafting the next CSP.

245. The representative of Mauritania welcomed the achievements under the CSP, saying that they had assisted the Government in meeting people's urgent needs and enhancing the resilience of local food systems. The representative said that the Government was committed to continuing to cooperate with WFP on enhancing food and nutrition security in Mauritania.
246. Thanking Board members for their comments, the country director said that WFP remained committed to exploring new and existing funding opportunities for its work in Mauritania. With regard to assisting refugees, she said that the Government supported refugees and their self-sufficiency and was working with WFP and UNHCR to plan and pilot durable solutions such as income-generating activities for refugees, which would be a key component of the next CSP.
247. The Regional Director for the Western Africa region outlined some of the ways in which lessons learned in Mauritania from WFP's work with the Government, UNICEF and the World Bank on adaptive social protection were being expanded into the Niger and Mali, along with work on urban assistance and institutions.

## **Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe portfolio**

### **2023/EB.1/11 Summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for Algeria (2019–2022) and management response**

248. The acting Director of Evaluation presented the evaluation of the interim CSP for Algeria for 2019–2022, which had identified positive results in the areas of partnerships and innovation; WFP had also met the basic food and nutrition needs of its expected beneficiaries throughout the year. However, food security indicators had only improved between 2019 and 2020, the contribution of school feeding activities to nutrition outcomes was uncertain and complementary activities designed to increase the production of fresh food had had limited impact in the reporting period. The five recommendations resulting from the evaluation were that WFP should address funding; clarify its strategic position regarding the constraints on accountability resulting from its relationship with the Algerian Red Crescent and partners; enhance needs-based targeting; strengthen complementary activities; and strengthen the integration of programming.
249. The regional director welcomed the insights provided by the evaluation, saying that they would inform the development of the next CSP. The recommendations reflected United Nations Security Council resolution 2654, which urged Member States to fund food programmes and called on aid agencies to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the camps in line with best practices; that approach would enable WFP to ensure that assistance reached the most vulnerable camp residents in a context of rising operational costs.
250. The country director described the origins of the food assistance approach used in the camps. In the face of major funding shortfalls WFP had begun to review existing arrangements to ensure that they were in line with its corporate standards and Security Council resolution 2654. Standard operating procedures would be drawn up and used to monitor operations, with donors in Algiers given monthly feedback on findings. WFP also planned to introduce the use of its digital beneficiary information and transfer management

- platform (SCOPE) for the general food assistance modality in the camps to facilitate the use of disaggregated data for needs-based tailored support for food-insecure refugees.
251. In response to the recommendation on integrated programming WFP planned to introduce innovative approaches such as CBTs and hoped to see the involvement of development partners working in Algeria in the design and implementation of resilience activities.
  252. Speaking in his national capacity one Board member said that efficient camp management was essential in the face of scarce funding. He called for the registration of camp residents by UNHCR and for WFP staff to be granted access to the camps. He endorsed vulnerability-based targeting and cautioned against the use of SCOPE data to determine the number of food-insecure people in the camps, saying that refugee registration fell under the mandate of UNHCR. He also asked WFP to consider how its operations could affect conflict and urged vigilance in the selection of local staff and partners.
  253. Endorsing the evaluation findings other Board members encouraged WFP to implement all the recommendations and ensure that the evaluation informed the development of the next CSP. One Board member, however, said that the recommendations lacked vision and called for a political solution to the situation of the Sahrawi refugees.
  254. Many speakers said that it was important to obtain accurate data and called for increased efforts to implement beneficiary registration in conjunction with UNHCR and UNICEF. One Board member urged WFP to use needs-based targeting and to strengthen its complaint and feedback mechanisms.
  255. While recognizing that climatic conditions in the camps were challenging, Board members encouraged WFP to engage in innovative resilience building activities developed in consultation with beneficiaries in order to support refugee autonomy. One Board member asked WFP to engage with beneficiaries and other stakeholders on the implementation of CBTs, in parallel with the introduction of SCOPE.
  256. On resilience building and the perceived lack of vision in the recommendations, the acting Director of Evaluation explained that the overall assessment of WFP's pilot complementary activities in the camps was positive but that targeting had not ensured that the assistance benefited the most food-insecure people, that the cost-effectiveness of the projects was not yet proven and that their sustainability was uncertain. These fundamental issues would need to be addressed and more clarity sought with regard to synergies with partners, financing and the potential for the handover of projects before more ambitious recommendations could be made.
  257. The country director described a number of pilot resilience building initiatives, including a fish farm, a hydroponics project and support for individual and community gardens using the Waterboxx technique. WFP was assisting 77 percent of the camp population based on a food security assessment from 2019, and a new assessment was being planned and would inform the next CSP. WFP was also working with UNHCR and other partners on needs assessments and targeting, which would be included in the refugee response plan.
  258. The regional director confirmed that WFP did not have the mandate to register camp residents and that its responsibility in the camps was to ensure that the food and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable were met. Programming was being delivered through official agreements with partners recognized by the United Nations and accredited in Algeria. Management would continue to exercise vigilance in its choice of partners and asked the Board to support its operations in the camps, noting that the performance of WFP and its partners was affected by the political environment.
  259. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, emphasized that SCOPE was used to capture and safely store beneficiary information; it was not a registration platform. Conflict sensitivity was key for all functions, including employee

and partner selection. Support for the self-reliance of refugees was a regional and global priority for WFP and an important tenet of its partnership with UNHCR; WFP would therefore continue to seek opportunities to invest in activities to build self-reliance despite the challenges faced in the camps.

260. One Board member requested clarification on the number of camp residents, noting a disparity between the figures quoted by WFP and those provided by UNHCR. He also sought more information on how conflict sensitivity was being mainstreamed into operations.
261. The regional director replied that WFP was supporting 133,672 food-insecure people in the camps, including the 90,000 most vulnerable refugees identified by UNHCR. That beneficiary caseload figured in the interim CSP approved by the Board in 2019 and was based on an inter-agency report and WFP's own food security assessment. WFP would conduct a new food security assessment based on the refugee response plan to determine the population that would be targeted under the new CSP.
262. The Deputy Executive Director said that WFP was finalizing its strategy on mainstreaming conflict sensitivity; the goal was to ensure that all operations embedded conflict sensitivity in their programmes based on clear context analysis and consideration of the risks of doing harm or contributing to conflict at each stage of the programme cycle, including in areas such as procurement, recruitment and the selection of cooperating partners.
263. The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria commended WFP for its life-saving work around the world and thanked donors for their continued support for vulnerable populations, including refugees in Algeria.

### **Special address by the President of the World Bank Group**

264. Introducing Mr David Malpass, the President of the World Bank Group, who had joined the meeting via a virtual connection from Washington, D.C., the President of the Executive Board recalled that Mr Malpass had addressed the Board in November 2020 during a high-level event on breaking down "silos" in order to strengthen the assistance provided to countries affected by crisis.
265. The President of the World Bank Group thanked the Executive Director and all staff for their critical contributions to efforts to address global hunger during a period of rising poverty and food insecurity after decades of development gains. At the September 2022 session of the United Nations General Assembly, the World Bank and WFP had emphasized the need to ensure the free flow of fertilizers on global markets, and the two organizations were part of a five-agency taskforce on the food insecurity crisis, along with FAO, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.
266. The President said that in implementing its USD 30 billion food and nutrition package for the period from April 2022 to June 2023 the World Bank was seeking to balance short-term crisis response with long-term efforts to strengthen food systems and community resilience. The Bank's private-sector arm, the International Finance Corporation, had launched a global food security platform providing farmers with access to critical supplies and a global food and nutrition security dashboard showing the need and the gaps in responses to food insecurity around the world.
267. WFP was an important partner for the World Bank, which in 2022 had provided the organization with USD 626 million for work at the humanitarian-development nexus in a wide range of thematic areas and countries, including logistics in Ukraine. The Bank was also working with WFP on impact evaluations aimed at generating evidence to inform the design and implementation of more effective operations and policies. The World Bank and WFP would continue to deepen their partnership, especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries.



268. Two Board members spoke on behalf of their lists. One focused on work in Africa, saying that food security was particularly fragile there and that all stakeholders must work together to find effective solutions adapted to local conditions and needs. Members of the list concerned had raised questions with regard to the World Bank's policies on capacity building for smallholder and young farmers; the Bank's actions to promote the use of debt relief to fund the strengthening of resilience and social protection in African countries; the Bank's guidelines on digitization and other innovations in the agriculture sector; and the alignment of the Bank's policies with local needs and policies. The Board member expressed the list's appreciation for the Bank's work in Africa, particularly on gender and the empowerment of women.
269. Welcoming the opportunity to engage with the President of the World Bank, the second speaker said that WFP's annual funding from the Bank and other international financial institutions had grown from USD 22 million in late 2019 to approximately USD 1 billion. Members of the list she represented had raised concerns and questions regarding the criteria for deciding when it was appropriate for development banks to fund United Nations entities and how the money they provided could best be used; the need to continue funding humanitarian response and resilience building activities in many countries beyond June 2023, when the World Bank's current food and nutrition package came to an end; lessons learned from the World Bank's work with the Rome-based agencies and their implications for the Bank's future collaboration with WFP; the Bank's comparative advantage in its partnership with WFP, particularly given the potential inefficiency of the flow of funds from donor governments to the Bank, to recipient governments and then to WFP; the Bank's priorities for engagement in humanitarian and conflict-affected settings; and the potential risks to WFP's capacity to deliver principled humanitarian assistance of partnering with governments that were involved in conflict or were likely to control the flow of WFP-provided assistance for political ends.
270. Responding to the points raised, the President of the World Bank Group said that 75 percent of World Bank funding was currently provided for programmes in African countries. Local conditions and needs were taken into account during the formulation of country partnership frameworks, which included input from local non-governmental organizations. The World Bank and other development banks were working to improve the targeting of the funds provided to United Nations entities, and the World Bank was exploring ways of expanding international development assistance and the use of debt relief, including through the common framework for debt reduction of the Group of Twenty.
271. Lessons learned from the Bank's work with the Rome-based agencies included greater awareness of the need to increase funding and improve the availability of data in tackling the global food crisis, which was likely to get worse. The Bank's comparative advantages in relation to WFP stemmed from its long-term engagement with governments, which enabled it to fund climate change, food security and structural reform programmes. With regard to the flow of donor government funding through the World Bank rather than directly to WFP the President said that in serving as a central source of donor funding for distribution to the aid programmes of multiple organizations the Bank had helped to improve the efficient use of those funds. The Bank was using all of the relevant funding windows and trust funds available for its collaboration with WFP on crisis response, food security and other areas of shared interest.
272. Following up, the Executive Director of WFP said that the strategic partnership built by the World Bank and WFP over recent years had led to millions of lives being saved, nations being stabilized and famine being averted.

**2023/EB.1/12 Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for the State of Palestine (2018–2022) and management response**

**State of Palestine country strategic plan (2023–2028)**

273. The acting Director of Evaluation presented the evaluation of the CSP for the State of Palestine for 2018–2022, which had found positive progress towards CSP outcomes and outputs, the strengthening of national capacity and the mainstreaming of gender and protection considerations. However, the sustainability of WFP interventions had been challenged by donor fatigue and the Government's lack of resources. The five recommendations from the evaluation called on WFP to match CSP activities and outcomes to future challenges, to identify and fully address remaining strategic and operational issues, to enhance the effectiveness and targeting of unconditional assistance, to strengthen coordination and support the Government's referral system for enhanced social protection and to enhance the approach to resilience and livelihoods.
274. The country director said that the country office had incorporated the evaluation recommendations into the CSP for the State of Palestine for 2023–2028. He showed a brief video illustrating the complex and challenging environment in the State of Palestine and outlined the main features of the new CSP, appealing to donors for funding for its implementation.
275. Board members praised the quality of the evaluation report and management's response, commending WFP staff for their work in assisting the most vulnerable Palestinians in a setting of escalating violence and need. They welcomed the CSP for 2023–2028, citing in particular the inclusion of resilience-building and livelihood interventions, work on CBT programmes with the ministry responsible for social development and the integration of nutrition considerations throughout CSP activities.
276. Members encouraged WFP to prioritize food-insecure households headed by women in its targeting decisions and to continue to coordinate its actions in the State of Palestine taking into account the priorities and concerns of all stakeholders, including by leading the operationalization of humanitarian–development–peace nexus approaches with its partners. One speaker said that their country was ready to contribute to WFP activities by providing technical support and training.
277. With one member saying that they found the CSP document too generic and lacking in statistics and data, members asked about WFP's implementing partners for CBT programmes, the roles and responsibilities of WFP and its partners in CSP implementation, the CSP's alignment with national development plans, how WFP would implement the nexus approach under the CSP and WFP's experience with CBT activities. One observer expressed the hope that the revised Grand Bargain endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee would be fully implemented by March 2024, and one member recommended that WFP engage with the school meals coalition arising from the 2021 United Nations food systems summit as a platform for linking WFP's food assistance to elements of the national school feeding programme other than food.
278. The acting Director of Evaluation said that in-kind food was sometimes the only option for isolated communities in the Gaza Strip.
279. The country director thanked Board members for their support and offers of technical assistance, saying that their comments would be taken into account in the plan for implementation of the CSP for 2023–2028. Examples of work with partners included targeting with the Ministry of Social Development using the ministry's social protection system for case management, hotline support and monitoring and evaluation; nutrition and other assessments with the Nutrition Division; climate-smart agriculture projects prioritizing young people and women with the Ministry of Education; and emergency preparedness with

the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. WFP procured locally for its in-kind food distributions, including olive oil from local farmers and bread from local bakers. The country office shared its experience with CBT programmes with partners and was exploring ways of expanding them in the Gaza Strip, taking into account local circumstances and following a do-no-harm approach. The use of electronic vouchers allowed WFP to negotiate favourable contracts with food suppliers, thereby mitigating the effects of price rises when it was unable to increase the value of the vouchers, as had occurred in 2022.

280. Following approval of the CSP for 2023–2028, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the State of Palestine thanked donors and other international partners for their support for the Palestinian people. The CSP was in line with government policies and strategies, she said, and she welcomed the work on livelihoods and resilience building, encouraging donor states and other partners to increase their support for that type of assistance.

### **2023/EB.1/13 Islamic Republic of Iran interim country strategic plan (2023–2025)**

281. The Country Director for the Islamic Republic of Iran presented the interim CSP for that country for 2023–2025, saying that it built on WFP's long experience in assisting refugees and reflected current challenges such as rising food prices and a growing number of people in need. The plan included a small contingency that would allow WFP to respond quickly to sudden onset crises such as floods and earthquakes.
282. One Board member took the floor to critique the CSP, encouraging WFP to ensure that it was concise, unambiguous and systematic. He requested clarification regarding the forecast growth in refugees from Afghanistan and emphasized the importance of taking an evidence-based approach to programming.
283. The country director explained that the contingency part of the CSP would allow WFP to scale up emergency relief operations rapidly if required; as this could be triggered by various events, the plan was intentionally non-specific in this area. Regarding the situation in Afghanistan, there had been population movements at the border between the two countries but not all those displaced had sought humanitarian assistance in the Islamic Republic of Iran. There was evidence that those on the move had sufficient resources to look after themselves and did not currently require support. As living conditions in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate, however, it was likely that poorer rural populations would also be forced to move, leading to an uptick in the need for assistance.
284. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, thanked the Board member for his comments, saying that they would be taken into account in the CSP implementation plan. She encouraged Board members to participate in the informal consultations on the development of CSPs so that their input could be reflected in the final drafts that were presented to the Board for formal approval.
285. Thanking WFP for its enduring support for his Government in assisting refugees in his country, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that he looked forward to continued close collaboration on the humanitarian response to that protracted challenge.

### **2023/EB.1/14 Libya country strategic plan (2023–2025)**

286. The Libya Country Director presented the CSP for that country for 2023–2025, saying that it reflected WFP's intention to move towards programming based on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in support of government efforts to assist vulnerable populations. The plan comprised four interlinked outcomes and introduced a switch from in-kind to cash assistance and from status-based to vulnerability-based targeting, with a focus on locations with significant food insecurity and presence of

- vulnerable groups. Food systems, conflict sensitivity, climate change, women's empowerment and the inclusion of people with disabilities were among the key cross-cutting themes of the CSP.
287. Board members welcomed the new CSP as a well-balanced and appropriate response to the challenges faced by Libya. They endorsed its focus on individual and institutional capacity building, the use of vulnerability-based targeting, its partnerships for the empowerment of women and young people and activities linked to education, water resource management and resilience building.
  288. One Board member called for the rapid assistance programme deployed in Libya to be expanded to as many people as possible. Another noted with satisfaction that a 2021 gender analysis had informed the development of the CSP. She welcomed increased efforts to foster gender equality and sought more insight into how WFP would support the integration of marginalized groups into the labour market, encouraging WFP to pay special attention to intersectionality.
  289. Welcoming WFP's progress in fighting hunger, reducing malnutrition and supporting food access, smallholder productivity and sustainable food systems, one Board member urged the organization to strengthen local and national supply chain capacity to ensure food availability in markets. He praised the shift from direct assistance to support for self-sufficiency and advocated an expansion of the national school feeding programme to include more vulnerable groups.
  290. Responding to Board members' comments and questions, the country director reported that WFP was working with the Government on better targeting for income-generation activities and a strengthened social protection system, which would facilitate the handover of activities in the future. Through capacity building programmes and youth employment systems WFP was supporting the employment of women and young people, who were a priority in all WFP projects in the country. The new CSP would see an increased focus on food systems through engagement with the Government's newly formed food system committee and with the private sector and the Government on market access. Meanwhile, the school meals programme would be expanded slowly with a view to handing it over to the Government in the next six years.
  291. Following the approval of the CSP the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Libya took the floor to express his Government's support for the plan and endorse its focus on sustainable development, food systems and education, particularly with regard to institutional knowledge transfer and training.

## **Policy issues (continued)**

### **Oral update on disability inclusion**

292. Introducing an oral update on disability inclusion, the acting Deputy Executive Director, Workplace Culture Department, underscored management's commitment to promoting disability inclusion through capacity development, communication and action to ensure that persons with disabilities were fully included and valued, that they thrived and that they had equal opportunities to contribute to the organization. The Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, then reported on WFP's progress in implementing the disability inclusion road map and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), particularly in the areas of oversight and coordination, guidance, training, monitoring and evaluation. Among other things he noted that WFP was increasingly involved in inter-agency efforts to promote disability inclusion and had partnered with vendors to strengthen accessible procurement.

293. As the road map had formally ended in December 2022, residual work on it had been incorporated into a 2023 disability inclusion work plan, which focused on how headquarters and regional bureaux could support local action on disability inclusion. An internal dialogue on the concept of inclusion and its relevance to WFP's mandate had been launched as part of efforts to drive more integrated programming that left no one behind.
294. Board members welcomed the progress made, in particular in relation to data collection, monitoring and evaluation. One Board member requested that disability inclusion be added as a regular agenda item for all formal Board sessions and that WFP's contribution to the UNDIS report be made public, urging continued commitment from donors and management in that area. Another Board member praised the pilot initiative in Asia and the Pacific and encouraged WFP to share lessons throughout the organization. In addition she asked WFP to commit to a timeframe for mainstreaming budget allocations for disability inclusion at the country and regional levels and encouraged the organization to play a lead role in promoting disability inclusion with its partners and within the wider United Nations system.
295. Another Board member focused her remarks on the importance of institutionalizing disability inclusion in areas such as procurement, advocacy and facility management. Two Board members commented on the value of working with and consulting organizations of people with disabilities, describing them as among the strongest advocates for inclusion. One Board member encouraged WFP to explore contracting modalities to facilitate such engagement; another called on the organization to consider how to target people with disabilities, especially women and girls. Two Board members called for increased attention to the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by some groups.
296. Management reiterated its commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities were involved in the planning and delivery of services and that country offices had in place mechanisms for consulting local associations of people with disabilities. As part of such work WFP was addressing contracting modalities, looking at the barriers faced by organizations of people with disabilities, women, indigenous people, youth and other marginalized groups in participating in WFP's partnership processes. Of particular concern for WFP was understanding how intersecting identities in combination with various barriers could lead to greater exclusion for the most food insecure.
297. On localization and partnerships with organizations of people with disabilities, management highlighted a discussion on local-level engagement that had taken place at the 2022 annual partnerships consultation. Work to integrate disability inclusion with other cross-cutting themes such as gender, indigenous peoples, accountability to affected populations and assistance for young people was continuing.
298. On the timeline for budget mainstreaming, management highlighted progress made in the annual budgeting process and support structures, including through the efforts of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Branch at headquarters. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific had allocated resources for disability inclusion as part of the implementation of the disability inclusion road map, and in 2023 the objective was to replicate that approach in the other regional bureaux. Interested donors were invited to approach management for more information.
299. The Bureau would be consulted on the request to add disability inclusion as a regular item on formal Board session agendas. Details of WFP's contribution to the UNDIS report would be shared with the Board once it had been approved by the United Nations.

## **Event to honour Executive Director David Beasley**

300. The President of the Executive Board paid tribute to the leadership of the Executive Director during the six years of his tenure, which had been marked by unprecedented global challenges related to conflict, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and food and fuel inflation. The Executive Director had positioned WFP as a global voice for the world's most vulnerable people and used his vast network to raise awareness of the cost of conflict around the world. He had succeeded in expanding the budget of the organization enormously, enabling WFP to assist far more people in need.
301. During the COVID-19 pandemic the Executive Director had been instrumental in enabling WFP to stay and deliver despite huge operational challenges. His strong advocacy on the link between food security and peace had played an important part in WFP being honoured with the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize. Throughout his time as head of WFP the Executive Director had proven himself to be an exemplary humanitarian leader, unwaveringly focused not only on the people WFP succeeded in reaching but also on those who remained out of reach.
302. The Secretariat then played a video honouring the Executive Director featuring tributes from leaders around the world.
303. Speaking on behalf of their respective lists, Board members commended the Executive Director for his outstanding leadership, communication and advocacy. Underscoring the need for more coordinated action to tackle global challenges, one Board member thanked the Executive Director for increasing WFP's focus on school feeding, smallholder resilience and institutional capacity strengthening; he also pointed to the large increase in the use of CBTs and its positive impacts on local markets as an important achievement.
304. Board members also praised the Executive Director's success in raising the profile of WFP and greatly increasing its budget. They recognized the personal sacrifice required to lead an organization such as WFP and the courage needed to take the life and death decisions involved in delivering frontline humanitarian aid. In addition to the Nobel Prize, the Executive Director had been instrumental in the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2417 on the use of hunger as a weapon of war. Within WFP he had also fostered innovation, digital transformation, smart risk taking and organizational agility and had supported staff morale at a time when the organization was under intense pressure.
305. Describing the hope embodied by WFP beneficiaries around the world, the Executive Director thanked the Board for their dedication to ensuring that WFP continued to deliver on its mandate as effectively as possible. He expressed gratitude for the friendships he had gained during his time at WFP and said that the success of the organization was due to its staff.

### **Evaluation reports (continued)**

#### **Oral update on the management response to the evaluation of WFP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

306. The Senior Advisor to the Deputy Executive Director, Supply Chain and Emergencies Department, presented an oral update on the management response to the evaluation of WFP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which followed up on the comprehensive response to the Office of Evaluation (OEV) evaluation provided at the Board's annual session in 2022 and took into account the results of an inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of the COVID-19 response published in January 2023. The knowledge gained from the two evaluations had been discussed at a cross-functional workshop in February that focused on two main areas.

307. Regarding the first of those areas – WFP’s actions to ensure resilient and adaptive systems for emergency response – the Senior Advisor recalled that most of the actions recommended in the OEV evaluation had been implemented by June 2022, including a revision of the emergency activation protocol and the new immediate scale-up revision. Since then, and based on lessons learned from the Ukraine and other emergency responses, the protocol had been revised with regard to the strengthening of the support and management structure, the clarification of the role and accountability of country directors and the possibility of having emergency coordinators at various levels within WFP. The new immediate scale-up revision had been used successfully following the recent earthquake in Türkiye, to which WFP had initiated an emergency response within 72 hours. WFP’s Immediate Response Account had also been revised to allow larger allocations of funding for WFP responses, but securing contributions for the account continued to be a challenge.
308. The second area of focus during the February workshop was WFP’s role as a systems enabler. Reflecting OEV’s recommendation that WFP expand its role in that capacity, the inter-agency evaluation had highlighted the criticality of common services in supporting the continuity of humanitarian response. Building on the progress reported at the Board’s 2022 annual session, WFP was exploring areas where it could expand that role, including in CBT programmes; a cash policy would be presented to the Board for approval at its next session. Limiting factors for the expansion included the huge increase in global food needs and the need to shift perceptions of WFP’s role from provider of last resort to systems enabler engaged from the planning stage of inter-agency responses.
309. A synthesis report on evidence and lessons from centralized and decentralized evaluations of WFP’s performance measurement and monitoring, presented under agenda item 5 c) of the current Board session, had addressed the OEV finding regarding the importance of knowledge management systems.
310. Two Board members spoke, one on behalf of a list. They welcomed the update, saying that it was comprehensive and relevant in covering the many important issues that had arisen during the pandemic. The evaluation findings had demonstrated that the humanitarian system was able to adapt in the face of an unprecedented crisis, and the Board members praised WFP and its partners for their work in supporting the most vulnerable people and communities during the pandemic. However, the evaluations had also highlighted the challenges facing the humanitarian response system and the need for change; one member expressed her country’s readiness to engage in discussions of how the humanitarian community could develop its systems to meet the demands of a changing world. Speaking on behalf of a list, the other Board member encouraged WFP to maintain its efforts to mobilize new partners from the public and private sectors while strengthening cooperation with its current partners.
311. The other member asked for more information on how WFP would use its experience from the COVID-19 response to improve its standard practices for assessment and targeting, increase its work with WHO in large-scale infectious disease outbreaks and improve and standardize its tools and systems for traceability, accountability and operational efficiency as part of its efforts to strengthen its role as a systems enabler.
312. The acting Deputy Executive Director, Supply Chain and Emergencies Department, said that the issues raised would be addressed at the next informal update on WFP operations and reported that WFP and WHO were drawing on their experience of working together during the COVID-19 response to explore ways of formalizing their joint engagement in future health crises.

313. The acting Director of Evaluation said that she had attended a meeting of the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation steering group the previous week, at which she had reported on WFP's workshop on the evaluation results, which was the first such event among steering group members.

### **Administrative and managerial matters**

#### **2023/EB.1/15 Establishment of a selection panel for the appointment of Independent Oversight Advisory Committee members**

314. The Secretary to the Executive Board reported that the term of one member of the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee (IOAC) would end in 2023. The Board was therefore required to appoint a new member.
315. In line with established procedure, each list had nominated a member to serve on a panel tasked with recommending a candidate to serve as the new IOAC member, as well as to recommend candidates to fill any further vacancies on the IOAC arising in 2023. The five nominees were presented in a document on the subject submitted for the Board's consideration at the current session (WFP/EB.1/2023/8-A).
316. The Board approved the establishment of the selection panel and the appointment to the panel of the nominees proposed in document WFP/EB.1/2023/8-A.

#### **2023/EB.1/16 Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit relevant to the work of WFP**

317. The Chief Risk Officer and Director, Risk Management Division, introduced WFP's responses to three new reports issued by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), reporting that WFP had implemented 90 percent of outstanding JIU recommendations. The JIU had issued four new recommendations to the Board in 2022, the responses to which had been formulated in consultation with the Executive Board Bureau alternates working group. Seven JIU reviews of issues such as preventing and addressing racism and racial discrimination, internal appeal mechanisms, accountability frameworks, flexible working arrangements, mental well-being, health insurance schemes and non-staff personnel contracts were under way.
318. Speaking on behalf of his list, one Board member commended WFP for its follow-up on JIU recommendations. He welcomed the recommendations related to business continuity and ethics and endorsed the recommendation to update the terms of reference of audit and oversight committees to include ethics and ensure that committee members had ethics expertise. He also praised the development of the Partner Connect platform, expressing the hope that it would benefit all African countries that faced data collection and management challenges. He asked management to keep the Board apprised of progress in implementing outstanding JIU recommendations and observed that evaluations should take into account the views of all stakeholders including vulnerable populations, the private sector, women and young people.
319. Another Board member thanked WFP for its detailed responses to the JIU recommendations, saying that her Government fully supported the recommendation that all staff receive regular mandatory ethics training and suggesting that such training should be annual. She requested an update on efforts to assign responsibility within WFP for the management of cooperating partners other than NGOs and urged management to enhance direct Board engagement with cooperating partners, including at the annual partnership consultation, and called for an annual survey of cooperating partners to facilitate dialogue on improving partnership management.
320. The Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, reiterated WFP's commitment to providing the Board with all necessary information on the management of cooperating partners. Work to facilitate regular interaction between Board



members and cooperating partners at the annual partnership consultation and in other forums was under way, as had been discussed with the Executive Board Bureau. She noted the request to conduct a regular survey of cooperating partners, adding that WFP was implementing many of the suggestions received through a survey conducted in 2022.

321. The acting Director of Ethics reported that 96 percent of WFP staff had completed mandatory ethics training in 2022. Refresher training would be conducted every three years in line with the JIU recommendation, and management would consider the suggestion to make the training more frequent. A new streamlined version of the online ethics course was being finalized and would be available from the end of 2023.
322. On the Partner Connect platform, the Chief Risk Officer affirmed WFP's commitment to strengthening data processes and visibility across its operations. The ethics-related expertise of members of the IOAC would be discussed with existing committee members and the Board during 2023.
323. The Deputy Executive Director, Management Department, and Chief Financial Officer thanked Board members for recognizing WFP's efforts to respond to JIU recommendations in a timely way, adding that management was committed to maintaining the excellent response rate resulting from the strong internal follow-up mechanism put in place for oversight reporting.

**2023/EB.1/17      Summary of the work of the 2022 second regular session of the Executive Board**

324. The President extended his sincere thanks to the Rapporteur for providing the summary of the 2022 second regular session of the Board, noting that the draft document had been circulated for Board member comment in February 2023. The version of the report being presented for approval incorporated the suggestions of Board members. The Board approved the summary.

**Verification of adopted decisions and recommendations**

325. The President expressed appreciation for the smooth running of the hybrid session. Among the highlights of the four days he noted the events held to mark the sixtieth anniversary of WFP, remarks by the Executive Director of UNEP and the President of the World Bank, the approval of a new aviation policy, Board consideration of key strategic evaluations and the approval of a number of CSPs.
326. The Rapporteur confirmed that the decisions and recommendations presented in the draft compilation of decisions and recommendations adopted by the Board at the current session corresponded to those that had been agreed during the session. The final versions of the adopted decisions and recommendations would be posted on the Board's website by the next working day, and a draft summary of the discussions that took place during the session would be circulated for comment in due course and considered by the Board for approval at its next session.

## Acronyms

AUDA	African Union Development Agency
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBT	cash-based transfer
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IOAC	Oversight and Advisory Committee
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
OEV	Office of Evaluation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCOPE	WFP's digital beneficiary information and transfer management platform
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization