



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

Executive Board

First regular session
Rome, 21 January 2025
and
Rome, 18–19 February 2025

Distribution: General

Agenda item 10

Date: 17 June 2025

WFP/EB.1/2025/10-B/DRAFT

Original: English

Summary of the work of the 2025 first regular session
of the Executive Board

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

Draft summary of the work of the 2025 first regular session of the Executive Board

Table of contents

Election of the Bureau and appointment of the Rapporteur	3
Current and future strategic issues	3
2025/EB.1/1 Opening remarks by the Executive Director, including on overview of current and future opportunities and challenges for WFP	3
Operational matters	5
Oral global overview on humanitarian needs and operational concerns and priorities.....	5
Oral update on the global assurance project	8
Policy issues	9
2025/EB.1/2 Policy cycle framework.....	9
Update on the implementation of the Changing Lives Transformation Fund	10
Oral update on the implementation of the gender policy.....	11
Oral update on disability inclusion	12
Oversight functions	13
2025/EB.1/3 Summary report on the evaluation of WFP's environmental policy and management response	13
2025/EB.1/4 Summary report on the evaluation of WFP's emergency preparedness policy and management response	14
2025/EB.1/5 Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit relevant to the work of WFP.....	15
Eastern Africa portfolio	16
Oral report on the field visit of the WFP Executive Board	16

Other business	16
2025/EB.1/6 Final report of the Executive Board working group on the Governance Review	16
Reports of the Executive Board sessions.....	17
2025/EB.1/7 Summary of the work of the 2024 second regular session of the Executive Board	17
Verification of adopted decisions and recommendations.....	18
Closing remarks by the Executive Director	18
Acronyms	19

Election of the Bureau and appointment of the Rapporteur

1. At the first part of the 2025 first regular session on 21 January 2025, the Board elected the members of the Bureau in accordance with the nominations put forward by the electoral lists, with the exception of the nominations for the alternate convenors of lists A and B. The Board elected members for those positions at the second part of the session on 18 February 2025, endorsing the nominations put forward by the respective lists.
2. The Board appointed the Permanent Representative of Czechia, Roman Diatka, to the role of Rapporteur for the session.

Current and future strategic issues

2025/EB.1/1 Opening remarks by the Executive Director, including on overview of current and future opportunities and challenges for WFP

3. The Executive Director opened her address paying tribute to a WFP team member who had died the previous week while being detained in Yemen. Recalling that 325 humanitarians had been killed in 2024, she emphasized WFP's steadfast commitment to duty of care to its staff and the people whom it served. With 120 active armed conflicts in 2024, WFP was forced to navigate growing risks to aid workers and access restrictions. Despite the challenges, its staff continued to work on front lines all around the world.
4. The funding outlook for humanitarian operations in 2025 and beyond was of great concern. Some of WFP's biggest donors had indicated that contributions in 2025 would be considerably lower than in 2024. Accordingly, WFP had revised its contributions forecast for 2025 from USD 7.7 billion to USD 6.4 billion and was working to ensure that its operational priorities reflected funding prospects. The Executive Director nonetheless continued to focus on securing as much funding as possible, engaging with global leaders and the private sector to convey a clear message that food security was a strategic objective as well as a humanitarian goal.
5. Many programme governments were increasingly using their own resources to finance activities that reduced needs in their countries. Such support would be explored further in 2025. Work had also begun on a new strategy on the private sector, WFP's fifth largest financial donor, which provided not only money but also expertise and innovation that helped WFP to increase its operational impact.
6. Improvement of WFP efficiency and effectiveness would remain a priority in 2025. Following the 15 percent reduction in the programme support and administrative budget in 2024, a further reduction of 10 percent was planned in 2025, with WFP continuing to prioritize front-line operations. Additional corporate efficiency measures had been introduced, with recruitment processes frozen across the whole organization; international travel restricted to essential missions; training run virtually; and all non-essential procurement of goods and services suspended. Implementation of the "one global headquarters" model and the global assurance project would proceed in order to remove duplication, fragmentation and unnecessary bureaucracy and ensure stringent oversight and control measures.
7. A leader in innovation, WFP would shortly publish its first strategy on artificial intelligence and machine learning. Such technologies would revolutionize the humanitarian sphere, enhancing decision making and efficiency.
8. The Executive Director was confident that the support of the Executive Board would allow WFP to continue to deliver for the people whom it served.

9. Board members offered their condolences to the family and friends of the WFP staff member who had died in Yemen and to those of the three other WFP workers who had lost their lives in the past three months. They expressed their great appreciation to WFP front-line workers and strongly supported the enhanced focus on duty of care. Many also stressed the need to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and encouraged WFP to continue related advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy.
10. Members reaffirmed their strong support to WFP as it navigated an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape, compounded by severe funding shortfalls and rising humanitarian needs. They were alarmed by the deterioration of global food security and the enormity of needs throughout the world, mentioning the situations in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Haiti, the Lake Chad region, Lebanon, Myanmar, the Sahel, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen. WFP was commended for its swift response following the ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon.
11. Speaking of the unprecedented funding challenges, Board members requested regular updates on their impact on WFP operations and on efforts to mitigate funding shortfalls. Two observers noted the danger of WFP's disproportionate reliance on a small number of donors, and one of them urged WFP to finalize its donor strategy and be more open to new ideas. A Board member, however, commended WFP for its efforts to broaden its donor base. Members noted that the engagement of the private sector, international financial institutions and new funding models, including multi-year funding, would be instrumental in the future. Financial contributions should be provided as early as possible and remain unearmarked to maximize flexibility. Several Board members sought more joint efforts in resource mobilization by the Rome-based agencies. They also suggested that the agencies consider establishing a shared service centre in a low-cost location.
12. One Board member said that it had paused its support for assistance programmes pending a review of its expenditure in that domain, although a waiver had been issued for life-saving humanitarian aid. Nevertheless, the member saw a need to adjust elements of WFP's work to ensure alignment with its national policies and called on WFP to avoid promoting ideologies in relation to gender, diversity, equity or inclusion while conducting its life-saving work. Many other Board members stressed their firm support for WFP's work on protection and social inclusion, including in relation to gender equality and people with disabilities, and an observer said that essential positions at WFP headquarters related to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse should be ensured through the budget for that work.
13. While Board members acknowledged that funding limitations required WFP to give priority to life-saving work, they also highlighted the need to continue to invest in anticipatory action and resilience to reduce future humanitarian needs and to strengthen national capacities to handle crises. It was important to involve governments in programme planning and implementation, and host countries and communities in efforts to support refugees, including in the context of regional crises.
14. Board members appreciated WFP's efforts to make the organization more cost-efficient and accountable. Several requested a formal update on the outcomes of the reforms, particularly the efficiencies achieved and savings realized, and one member requested an independent external evaluation of the global assurance project. Several Board members supported the strategy to empower country offices by increasing delegation and resources, stressing the need for adequate internal controls in doing so.
15. Board members looked forward to supporting the development of the strategic plan for 2026–2029. One member thanked WFP for its early and frequent engagement with the Board, urging it to maintain transparent communication as it navigated the new financial parameters and sought to identify further efficiencies.

16. Several members stressed the importance of localization in enhancing the quality, impact and sustainability of WFP's operations. One of them said that where possible, WFP should start planning the gradual handover of its operations to national and local entities, so that it could focus resources elsewhere, and an observer encouraged WFP to formulate a new policy to guide such work. In general, WFP was urged to develop stronger coordination and collaboration and more strategic partnerships with other United Nations organizations, national governments and with other relevant stakeholders, including local partners.
17. Several Board members commended WFP school meals programmes, which provided multiple benefits, particularly when the food was locally sourced. One member stressed the importance of investing in local agricultural food systems and value chains.
18. Many Board members provided details of the financial and other support that their countries were providing to WFP and described their involvement in other initiatives in their own and other countries, including through South–South and triangular cooperation. It was noted that such cooperation could be used to deploy innovation and technology at scale. An observer mentioned the negative effects on global food security of the international economic sanctions imposed on some countries.
19. Members commended WFP for organizing the strategic dialogue on 17 February 2025, noting that the discussions had covered highly relevant topics and offered valuable insights.
20. The Executive Director thanked the Board and observers for raising important issues that would be explored further during the session.

Operational matters

Oral global overview on humanitarian needs and operational concerns and priorities

21. The Deputy Executive Director presented the overview which, in accordance with a recommendation from the Governance Review, incorporated reports from the six regional bureaux, previously presented as separate agenda items. The six regional directors were also present on the podium.
22. WFP's operational environment continued to shift rapidly owing to an unpredictable mix of geopolitical tension, climate crises, economic disruption and conflict, with needs continuing to grow while funding decreased.
23. Among WFP's four corporate scale-up operations, there had been significant developments in the Syrian Arab Republic, which was undergoing a fragile transition after 14 years of conflict. Security had improved, although fighting continued in parts of the country. Many Syrians had begun to return, but almost half of the population was food insecure, so the situation remained dire. WFP had the capacity to support the transition but required resources to address urgent needs. The provision of short- to medium-term humanitarian aid remained essential. In Lebanon, levels of need remained high. WFP was assisting vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees and continued working with partners to allow for the voluntary dignified returns of the latter.
24. In the Gaza Strip, the Deputy Executive Director had seen shocking levels of destruction in his recent visit. While the situation remained uncertain, people were returning to the north trying to rebuild their lives. The humanitarian community had stepped up, delivering assistance when there was access. Since the ceasefire, WFP had been providing logistics and food assistance for the United Nations coordinated response. Continued access remained critical to continue delivering assistance. The Sudan regional crisis continued to be the most severe hunger crisis in the world, and escalating violence was threatening regional stability. WFP had recently reached some previously inaccessible areas, including locations at risk of famine, and was supporting Sudanese refugees, who continued to arrive in neighbouring countries. Economic disruption persisted in and around the Sudan, while resources

- remained limited in Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan. WFP was also working the governments, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Bank and the private sector on resilience programmes to support refugees. An effective regional response required access, including cross-line and cross-border, and an international WFP presence across the Darfur and Kordofan states; safety and security guarantees; increased advocacy; and flexible funding.
25. Moving to corporate attention operations, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a dramatic escalation in violence had displaced thousands of people and created urgent needs while mass lootings of warehouses, attacks on humanitarian workers, access restrictions and funding gaps limited WFP's ability to respond. Support was required for unhindered humanitarian access and the safe movement of humanitarian personnel and goods; a cessation of hostilities, in order to resume operations; and sufficient funding to scale up assistance. In Yemen, WFP had been devastated by the death of an employee held in arbitrary custody with other United Nations colleagues. The United Nations Secretary-General had condemned the tragic loss, called for thorough investigation and announced the pause of all United Nations operations in Saada governorate. Efforts continued at the highest level to raise awareness and advocate for the release of detained colleagues. In the meantime, millions of people in Yemen remained in dire need and WFP needed a conducive operating environment to allow an effective response.
 26. In Mozambique, WFP was supporting the Government's response to the combined effects of armed conflict in the north, El Niño weather patterns and climate change, and post-election civil unrest in December. Security incidents had forced WFP to temporarily suspend operations in Cabo Delgado, while 5 million people were facing food insecurity in the central and south parts of the country. The Deputy Executive Director would visit the country with the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator to advocate for environments conducive to the delivery of assistance and increased funding support from the international community.
 27. In the central Sahel, despite an upsurge in violence which led to a substantial increase in forced displacement and food insecurity, WFP had secured authorization to resume United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights in Mali and no longer required armed escorts when reaching certain besieged areas of Burkina Faso. In complex operating environments, WFP was using various delivery modalities to reach those in need, including airlifts where required.
 28. In Afghanistan, challenges including restrictions placed on women's employment and movement and the risk of a ban on international NGOs were hampering the ability of WFP and its partners to assist the growing numbers of food-insecure and malnourished people. WFP was working around the restrictions to ensure that it could stay and deliver using a principled approach.
 29. In Myanmar, WFP was working with authorities and local armed groups to obtain access to millions of displaced people in need, while continuing to support refugees hosted by Bangladesh, who remained highly dependent on WFP food assistance. A collective approach was needed to address the crisis, and WFP was working with the United Nations Special Envoy, members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other United Nations partners to address needs comprehensively.
 30. In Haiti, WFP had scaled up its operations in the face of escalating violence and displacement, which had left half the population food-insecure and caused the United Nations mission and other international organizations to leave the country. UNHAS, which played a critical role for the operations and the humanitarian community at large, risked disruption due to funding shortfalls.

31. In Ukraine, increased attacks were hampering the delivery of assistance, but WFP was reaching 1.4 million people, including communities on the front lines, and working with the Government to move grains to safer areas and on the Grain from Ukraine initiative, serving the world's most food-insecure countries.
32. In many contexts, WFP was investing in resilience programming and support to national emergency and social protection systems to reduce the needs arising from cyclical crisis response and help protect development gains. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, WFP was providing technical assistance to 22 governments, including for emergency protocols and disaster prevention in Nicaragua, and public food procurement processes in Guatemala. In West Africa, WFP's role as co-chair of the Cadré Harmonisé would support governments in using data to improve policies and response strategies. WFP continued to scale resilience efforts as part of Great Green Wall Initiative to address land degradation.
33. With severe climate extremes damaging livelihoods, WFP's anticipatory action in Asia and the Pacific and in Eastern Africa was helping to mitigate the effects of typhoons in the Philippines and flooding in Somalia, while other efforts in Eastern Africa included the development of climate-smart, home-grown school meal programmes in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda to strengthen local food systems. In Western Africa, WFP's scale-up of resilience building initiatives had reduced the number of people requiring food assistance in the Niger, and the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa was supporting government-led responses to the impacts of El Niño. WFP was also assisting people affected by wildfires and hurricanes, in collaboration with governments, and exploring the use of debt swap arrangements to fund climate adaptation and food security initiatives. WFP had partnered with the Government of Barbados and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency to create the Caribbean regional emergency logistics centre, which was due to open in Barbados in March 2025.
34. Concluding his remarks, the DED requested the Board's support in raising global awareness of, and response to, these crises; upholding the humanitarian principles, including by advocating safe, unhindered humanitarian access; increasing funding for WFP's work, providing flexible funding whenever possible; and engaging in mediation efforts aimed at achieving sustainable political solutions to ongoing conflicts.
35. Thanking the Deputy Executive Director for the update, Board members extended their condolences to the family and friends of the WFP staff member killed in Yemen. Condemning the worldwide increase in attacks on humanitarian workers, the blocking of humanitarian access to people in need, and the use of starvation as a weapon of war, they reiterated the Deputy Executive Director's appeal for international efforts to ensure adherence to international humanitarian law and to hold to account those who broke it.
36. Board members commended WFP staff for their commitment to meeting the food and nutrition-related needs of vulnerable people while providing the humanitarian community with coordination and logistics services, often in dangerous and challenging environments. Several members expressed support for specific WFP operations, mentioning WFP's support for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh; provision of essential humanitarian assistance in Gaza, in cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; presence and life-saving work in Haiti; and work with the Government in Ukraine to support the national social protection system and the Grain from Ukraine initiative.

37. While a number of Board members urged WFP to maintain its focus on emergency response, many emphasized the value of building resilience, citing WFP's approach to saving lives while contributing to long-term recovery as a comparative advantage. Board members welcomed WFP's role in strengthening social protection mechanisms, school meal programmes, local supply chains and food systems, including through country capacity strengthening; its engagement with national, regional and local actors, including communities; and its increasing focus on anticipatory action and preparedness activities.
38. Recognizing that growing funding gaps called for difficult decision-making, Board members urged WFP to continue its efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its work; strengthen its systems for the prioritization and targeting of programmes, focusing on the acute needs of the most vulnerable people; and pursue innovative financing mechanisms, including climate funding and cooperation with development banks and the private sector. Many Board members outlined their governments' contributions to WFP's operations in their own and other countries and urged donors to provide more flexible and long-term support for WFP's increasingly essential programmes.
39. Other appeals to the international community included calls for humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy aimed at ensuring unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need; international engagement in peace negotiations in countries facing conflict, such as Israel and the State of Palestine, the Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen; and better coordination among donors, with greater sharing of the financial risks and other burdens of humanitarian and development work.
40. One Board member sought additional information on the benefits of WFP's capacity building work and investment in anticipatory action in terms of strengthened preparedness for and response to emergencies.
41. The six directors of WFP's regional bureaux joined the Deputy Executive Director in thanking Board members for their support and responding to their comments. Anticipatory action contributed to WFP's preparedness and response capacity through the development of links to national response and social protection systems, which provided WFP with access to additional financing mechanisms when crises occurred. Highlights from the regions included the facilitation of food assistance deliveries in Gaza; work with governments on preparedness for climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean; resilience programmes that were reducing the need for humanitarian assistance in the Sahel; the use of anticipatory action to address the climate crisis in Southern Africa; and engagement with the private sector, foundations, governments and international financial institutions to fund social protection systems in Eastern Africa.

Oral update on the global assurance project

42. Management updated the Board on progress made and lessons learned from the global assurance project (GAP). Recent achievements included the publication of new standards for identity management, minimum monitoring requirements and community feedback mechanisms. Plans for 2025 included the rollout of the GAP to medium- and low-risk country offices; the publication of assurance frameworks for cooperating partner management and targeting; the continued development and rollout of new tools and systems; and the launch of a comprehensive lessons learned exercise. Challenges identified thus far included issues posed by high staff turnover and conflict or instability in WFP's operational areas; the need to build the trust and participation of local communities; and the need for light flexible systems and tools for risk-informed and cost-effective solutions.
43. Board members commended WFP for its dedication to strengthening the assurance and quality of its operations through the GAP and its shift to a culture of delivery, quality and assurance, which should be reflected in the new strategic and management plans. They welcomed the progress made in strengthening monitoring frameworks, incorporating

innovative technology into assurance systems and enhancing community feedback mechanisms, and they encouraged WFP to continue strengthening its digital identity verification, cooperating partner management, and targeting systems. One member cautioned that the GAP should not promote ideology in relation to gender, diversity, equity or inclusion.

44. Recognizing the difficulties of implementing certain assurance actions in complex political and operational settings, Board members recommended that, in such instances, WFP adapt its approach based on risk analysis and consultations with the donors concerned. They emphasized the importance of informing the Board and donors of the risks and trade-offs involved in operating in challenging environments with a view to developing a common risk tolerance and promoting the sharing of risks.
45. Implementation of the new assurance framework and standards during and after the GAP rollout would require close monitoring, continuous capacity building, enhanced cooperation with partners and sustained funding. Board members welcomed the plans for including assurance-related costs in country office budgets and developing corporate guidance and tools for the calculation and monitoring of those costs.
46. Looking forward to continuing to work with management on overcoming the challenges of providing strengthened assurance, Board members recommended that future updates focus on the impact and cost-effectiveness of the risk mitigation actions taken. Several members agreed with the plans for conducting an evaluation of the GAP in late 2026 or early 2027, allowing sufficient time to implement the new standards and tools.
47. Members sought more information on the major risks to the GAP's successful implementation and sustainability; the high-risk country operations where GAP implementation was delayed; and WFP's application of the new assurance framework to its work with partner governments.
48. In response, management said that implementation of the project in high-risk countries was expected to be complete by the end of March 2025. The current average completion rate of 80 percent was in line with the project benchmark, but some country offices were lagging.

Policy issues

2025/EB.1/2 Policy cycle framework

49. WFP management presented the policy cycle framework, which set out a streamlined, efficient and predictable process to ensure that WFP policies help achieve the objectives of the strategic plan and guide the formulation of country strategic plans. The framework reaffirmed the role of the Board in establishing the policy agenda and clarified its decision making role. It also included a clearer definition of normative instruments; clarification of which processes applied to management policies and which to programmatic policies; the systematic identification of potential policy gaps; greater Board engagement at the outset of the policy formulation process; the preparation of costed implementation plans with an indicative budget for information; and further explanation on policy dissemination, evaluation and decommissioning.
50. Board members described the framework as a significant step towards more effective, coherent and transparent governance of policy development, implementation and evaluation. They highlighted various elements of the framework, such as the engagement of a variety of stakeholders in policy development; its clarification of the role of the Board; the way it built on the recommendations of the Governance Review working group; its explanations of WFP's normative instruments and components; its proactive approach to identifying policy gaps; its emphasis on evidence-based policy development; its people centred approach; the requirement that an implementation plan and indicative budget be

presented, for information, at the time of policy approval; policy evaluation, which would foster continuous learning and adaptation; and the publication of WFP strategies on an online platform.

51. Several Board members appreciated the focus on equitable geographical representation in the framework but insisted that there should be equitable participation of developing countries in all phases of the policy cycle. They also urged WFP to ensure that the framework did not lead to rigidity in decision making, noting that it was vital to be able to adapt policies to operating environments.
52. Board members also recommended that policies be aligned with international frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other United Nations initiatives, and that field-level feedback mechanisms and exchanges between headquarters and country offices be strengthened.
53. More information was requested on the tools and methods that WFP would use to strengthen programme policy coherence; the policy gap analysis, specifically which policies would need to be developed from scratch and which could simply be updated; and the handling of management policies as opposed to programmatic policies.
54. In response, management explained that while management policies differed from programmatic policies in some aspects of their rollout, the policy cycle framework applied to all types of policy. Policies were implemented using a range of tools, including training, normative guidance, Executive Director's circulars and guidance for country offices; the latter provided a two-way loop for the field to relay progress on policy implementation and highlight areas that might require clarification or further support. The annual policy compendium provided the Board with an overview of all WFP policies and the policy gap analysis, while policy evaluations indicated whether a policy required updating or replacing.

Update on the implementation of the Changing Lives Transformation Fund

55. The update covered the first full year of implementation of the Changing Lives Transformation Fund (CLTF) initiative in ten country offices, which had been competitively selected based on their potential to deliver the ambition set out under the fund. Early results were positive, with the USD 343 million in catalytic funding raised in the initiative's first year already exceeding the target of USD 265 million set for the fifth year.
56. Board members welcomed the update and congratulated WFP on the achievements made, expressing particular appreciation for the initiative's role in fostering partnerships with governments and other stakeholders; facilitating WFP's engagement in joint work with other United Nations entities; providing country offices with a source of flexible and predictable funding to support their long-term plans; mobilizing co-financing from governments, international financial institutions, the private sector and other donors; and fostering collaboration throughout WFP. They welcomed the initiative's focus on transition from humanitarian assistance, national system strengthening, climate action, cross-cutting priorities and the establishment of a robust research agenda with baseline data complemented by a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework.
57. While many Board members recognized the initiative's value in improving food security, including through strengthening resilience and national systems, they urged WFP to ensure that support for the CLTF did not undermine its emergency operations. One member expressed support for catalytic financing and for the food security initiatives delivered under the CLTF while cautioning against the promotion of ideology related to gender, diversity, equity and inclusion through CLTF-funded programmes.

58. Regarding future action, Board members recommended that WFP use lessons, evidence, best practices and institutional structures from the CLTF initiative to inform and facilitate its efforts to bring about sustainable and scalable change, including in fragile settings, and that membership of the CLTF selection and learning committee be expanded to include representatives of WFP's regional bureaux and country offices. Some members called for a deeper discussion of the expansion of the fund and encouraged WFP to scale up the CLTF model.
59. Further information was sought on the engagement of national and local civil society in CLTF projects; the thematic areas of WFP's work that attracted the most catalytic funding; the amounts of catalytic funding that WFP expected to raise in future years; and the CLTF's role in the localization policy.
60. Thanking Board members for their support, management explained that the initiative contributed to localization through the implementation of CLTF-funded projects at the local level, with local governments and other local partners receiving capacity strengthening and other support. CLTF-funded projects were created with governments from the outset. The results of the initiative would be measured through key performance indicators, including measuring reductions in humanitarian needs and food security, nutrition and income change. The initiative was unlikely to affect the emergency response capacity of country offices because dedicated staff had been appointed to implement it, and the country offices selected for implementation were those most ready to engage in longer-term resilience work. It was difficult to project future levels of catalytic funding, but many opportunities for additional resource mobilization had been identified. Meanwhile, management was exploring the options for making the selection and learning committee more inclusive.

Oral update on the implementation of the gender policy

61. The Assistant Executive Director, Programme Operations Department prefaced the update by emphasizing WFP's commitment to meeting the specific needs and priorities of the people it served. Data showed that women and girls were disproportionately affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, and in the current context of high needs and insufficient funding, it was more important than ever that WFP continued to identify and prioritize the people at greatest risk, delivering the food assistance they needed in the most effective way.
62. The Director, Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service highlighted recent achievements in the implementation of the gender policy, including improvements in analytical tools and the development of an accountability for results framework. She provided examples of how the policy enhanced WFP's operational effectiveness by helping it to better understand and respond to the different ways in which food insecurity and malnutrition affected women, men, boys and girls. While strong progress had been made in terms of programming, results, partnerships, resources and accountability, the funding outlook for the implementation of the policy was a major concern and WFP encouraged more donors to support the work.
63. Many Board members spoke of the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment and the prioritization of the most vulnerable people in efforts to achieve the SDGs, particularly those on ending poverty and hunger. They welcomed WFP's progress in implementing the gender policy, noting the integration of gender considerations into WFP programmes; the benefits of school meals programmes, training and support for land access for women; improvements in the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by age and sex; and the development of a strong accountability and results framework. Many members called for the policy to be adequately resourced.

64. One member indicated his country's position that WFP's programmes should defend women's rights and that people should not be stigmatized, demeaned or shut out of opportunities because of their race or sex. He further elaborated that when discussing sex-based distinctions WFP should reconsider the use of the term gender, and noted that his government did not support diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility approaches, which it deemed to diminish the importance of individual merit when selecting people for jobs and services.
65. Other members encouraged WFP to strengthen its partnerships with women's organizations, the other Rome-based agencies and other relevant United Nations organizations and to work with actors providing sexual and reproductive health services to reduce undernutrition in pregnant and breastfeeding women. One member urged WFP to implement recommendations related to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, including those made by the External Auditor. There were calls for gender equality to be a priority in the strategic plan for 2026–2029 and the future localization policy.
66. More information was sought on the potential impact of forecast funding shortfalls on the achievement of the policy's goals; the implications of organizational changes on the policy's implementation; the collection of disaggregated data; the potential for expanding partnerships; and the incorporation of lessons learned from previous gender strategies.
67. In response, management noted that funding pressures threatened to slow the momentum behind the implementation of the policy. On partnerships, WFP had invested in collaboration with women-led organizations, cognizant of the important role played by local entities as first responders in the event of crises; partnerships with other United Nations agencies and with NGOs had also been strengthened. On data, new indicators had been added to the corporate results framework to measure change effected through the gender policy, and country offices were receiving support to develop a people-centred accountability framework tailored to their operational setting.

Oral update on disability inclusion

68. Management reported that WFP had met or exceeded 12 of the 15 indicators in the United Nations reporting framework for disability inclusion and was planning to achieve the remaining three by the end of 2025. In implementing corporate policies and standards in country offices, WFP worked alongside local actors and governments to identify the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and develop flexible solutions.
69. Recognizing the importance of disability inclusion in ensuring that assistance reached those most vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition, Board members commended WFP's progress, congratulating them on being a leader among United Nations entities. They encouraged WFP to reflect its commitment to disability inclusion in its new strategic plan and corporate results framework, and they called on the international community to support the organization's work through strategic partnerships and financial contributions.
70. Board members welcomed WFP's people-centred approach, its focus on rights-based approaches and its efforts to increase data collection for targeting and measurement processes as well as the new staff duty of care framework. Support was voiced for WFP's participation in the Global Disability Summit to be held in Berlin in April.
71. Recognizing that women and girls with disabilities often faced increased difficulties, several Board members urged WFP to continue its efforts to integrate disability inclusion into its work on gender equality and protection issues, in accordance with its gender strategy. One member, however, while expressing his government's support for the rights of persons with disabilities and the importance of ensuring that they received food assistance when in need, also conveyed his government's opposition to programming that promoted diversity, equity,

inclusion and accessibility precepts and took issue with the word *inclusion*. He urged WFP to rename its strategies and activities related to the provision of assistance to persons with disabilities, expressing his government's willingness to work with WFP to that end.

72. Other Board members encouraged WFP to continue adapting food distribution systems, strengthening the capacity of its staff and local communities, and ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in resilience-building programmes. The organization was also called on to collect more disaggregated data; support governments in integrating disability inclusion into national systems; enhance its engagement with organizations of persons with disabilities; and update procurement policies and evaluation guidelines. Board members looked forward to receiving regular updates on disability inclusion at future sessions.
73. Additional information was requested on the effects of WFP's contributions to gender equality and disability inclusion on efforts to reach SDG 2.
74. Thanking Board members for their support, management said that the creation of the Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service in 2024 had helped to increase the efficiency of WFP's work on gender equality and disability. Research showed that progress towards SDG 2 differed between persons with disabilities and those without – WFP was committed to working with others to improve this. While recognizing that there was a high degree of consensus across the Board on matters related to gender and disability, management expressed their willingness to seek further consensus regarding the terminology used.

Oversight functions

2025/EB.1/3 Summary report on the evaluation of WFP's environmental policy and management response

75. Summarizing the evaluation findings, the Director of Evaluation said that while the policy had a clear vision of environmental sustainability, its consideration of social dimensions was lacking; implementation of the policy had been hindered by divided institutional ownership and tools that were limited in scope and application. Management had accepted the evaluation's four main recommendations and work had begun on their implementation.
76. Board members commended WFP's commitment to improving the environmental sustainability of its operations and welcomed the plans for revising the policy in line with the new environmental and social sustainability framework. They encouraged WFP to mainstream the social dimensions of sustainability into all its operations and to strengthen its monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems for work in that area; they also supported the increased link between the policy and supply chain activities.
77. Several Board members welcomed the costs savings and increased operational effectiveness resulting from the policy; one of those members also took the opportunity to reiterate his government's opposition to policies, programmes or recommendations that promoted diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Other Board members, however, emphasized the value of such initiatives in helping to ensure that WFP "left no one behind" and urged management to implement all of the recommendations from the evaluation.
78. Board members encouraged management to develop a costed implementation plan for the new policy, including estimates of the expected cost savings. WFP was also urged to support country offices and partners in implementing the policy; strengthen and expand WFP's partnerships; and explore innovative mechanisms for the stable financing of environmental and social sustainability initiatives. Given the primary importance of WFP's work on saving lives, Board members sought insight into how the policy and related safeguards would be applied in emergency operations.

79. Management replied that they were examining whether and how to apply environmental and social safeguards in emergency operations; supply chains would be an important focus of that work. Initial investments would be required to generate further cost savings.
80. The Director of Evaluation added that her office was strengthening its processes for assessing environmental sustainability, but evaluation was not a substitute for a strong monitoring system.

2025/EB.1/4 Summary report on the evaluation of WFP's emergency preparedness policy and management response

81. The Director of Evaluation said that the evaluation had found the policy to be coherent with WFP's strategic plans and global commitments. Investments in preparedness had enabled more timely responses by WFP and by governments, but the limited conceptual clarity of the policy, a weak evidence base, implementation efforts that were disjointed at times, funding gaps, and partnerships without clear directions had prevented WFP from achieving more.
82. Management agreed with all five evaluation recommendations and had responded with a comprehensive set of 22 actions to address them.
83. Board members commended WFP for its vital role in emergency preparedness, praising its expertise in logistics, supply chain management, early warning systems and anticipatory action. They acknowledged its efforts to improve internal coordination and enhance governments' readiness capacity, noting tangible results in policy development, contingency planning, logistics, early warning systems, anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection. They endorsed the evaluation recommendations, especially those related to strengthening partnerships, improving emergency staff deployment mechanisms, consolidating the package of tools used for emergency preparedness and updating the policy's theory of change.
84. Several areas for further improvement were identified, including evidence generation; gender, protection, disability and inclusion; localization and climate resilience; partnerships, including with other United Nations agencies, private-sector actors, development institutions and NGOs; and innovative and flexible multi-year financing mechanisms. Long-term engagement models should be developed to enhance national ownership and ensure sustainability, with clear handover and exit strategies from the outset. There were also calls for WFP to develop a road map to ensure a cohesive approach to emergency preparedness throughout the organization, with clear accountability mechanisms, performance indicators and resource allocation strategies.
85. Some members stressed the importance of training field staff and providing them with practical guidance on gender, disability and inclusion considerations in emergency preparedness. Engagement with governments should focus on advocacy related to gender, protection and inclusion, and WFP should seek to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation aimed at sharing best practices in resilience. Ensuring the participation of vulnerable groups and local actors in emergency preparedness was also deemed crucial.
86. While voicing support for WFP's role in emergency preparedness, one member expressed his government's opposition to policies, programmes and recommendations that involved the promotion of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.
87. Several members supported the development of a policy update, grounded in evidence and aligned with the next strategic plan, suggesting that the update should clarify the links with other WFP policies and the division of responsibilities between WFP and other United Nations agencies and include a comprehensive implementation strategy with accountability mechanisms. Further information was sought on the recommendation that WFP refine its definition of emergency preparedness,

88. Thanking the Board for its feedback, management explained that staff capacity building was under way, and substantial guidance on emergency preparedness was already available. The focus was on simplifying and harmonizing that guidance and ensuring that it remained accessible to field staff at all times. On localization, WFP was committed to ensuring alignment between the new localization policy and any updates of the emergency preparedness policy.
89. With regard to the recommendation that WFP better define emergency preparedness, the Director of Evaluation explained that the term was at times confused with disaster risk reduction and resilience, also because the latter could constitute an emergency preparedness activity in some contexts. It would therefore be helpful to have clearer definitions for these terms. On localization, the evaluation report included many positive findings in terms of local engagement, while noting scope for strengthening local partnerships.

2025/EB.1/5 Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit relevant to the work of WFP

90. The Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer outlined the numerous best practices that WFP applied to the handling of reviews of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), which had led the JIU to rank WFP as one of the top performing participating organizations. The Chief Risk Officer affirmed WFP's appreciation for the work of the JIU and the valuable insights provided by its reviews, which were a means of benchmarking WFP against the other 27 participating agencies. The report before the Board included information on four JIU reports issued in 2024 and management responses to the related recommendations. WFP's oversight recommendation tracking dashboards had been linked directly to the restricted area of the Board website to provide members with streamlined access to oversight data, an effort aimed at supporting informed Board decision making and enhancing transparency. During the reporting period, the Secretariat had followed up on 29 recommendations and provided status updates on each. Sixteen recommendations had been closed, including the oldest open recommendation, which was from the 2021 ethics function review, and entailed the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee updating its terms of reference to include ethics as an area requiring relevant expertise.
91. As part of its 2025 programme of work, the JIU had initiated a review of indirect support costs, prompted by a request from the Rome-based membership; WFP would keep the Board apprised of this and other JIU reviews in 2025, the topics of which included strategic planning, recruitment policies, travel arrangements, data governance frameworks and decentralized evaluation.
92. Praising the work of the JIU, Board members described its vital contribution to improving governance, accountability, coordination and efficiency throughout the United Nations system. One speaker underscored the value of evidence of the efficiency and effectiveness of multilateralism, in particular for donors. Members welcomed WFP's efforts to implement JIU recommendations and encouraged continued follow-up on implementation, including through human resource processes. Two members urged WFP to implement the recommendations of the JIU in its 2020 report on multilingualism in the United Nations system, especially with regard to the use of official languages during Executive Board meetings and during the recruitment and training of staff. One member encouraged the implementation of JIU recommendations aimed at improving efficiency, effectiveness and oversight but cautioned against the promotion of ideology in relation to gender, diversity, equity and inclusion.
93. Management thanked the Board for its support and took note of the proposal to include multilingualism as one of the key areas to consider in recruitment.

Eastern Africa portfolio

Oral report on the field visit of the WFP Executive Board

94. The Board member leading the field visit to Rwanda reported on the visit, which took place from 24 to 29 November 2024 with the participation of Board representatives from Chile, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia and Poland, and thanked the WFP managers and staff members involved in preparing for and managing the visit.
95. The visit had started and finished in Kigali, where the group had witnessed the collaborative relationships that WFP had with the Government of Rwanda, other local actors and the United Nations country team, particularly the other Rome-based agencies. The group had also met the Prime Minister, the ministers of agriculture, education and disaster management, and numerous mayors and representatives of local authorities, and had noted the presence of women at all levels of government structures.
96. During visits to the south and west of the country, where levels of food insecurity were most severe, the group had witnessed operations in the Kagame and Kamira refugee camps, projects with agricultural cooperatives in Mutsuhito, school meal activities in Kabiri, and agricultural resilience and business incubation projects in Rosero, where they had met young entrepreneurs. With Rwanda facing challenges that included the impacts of climate change, the need to modernize its agrifood system while diversifying its economy, and the recent decrease in international funding for humanitarian and development initiatives, WFP's priorities in the country included resilience building, the strengthening of value chains, and the integration of its programmes with national policies. The group's meetings with beneficiaries and humanitarian workers had demonstrated the importance of WFP's work, leading them to call on donors to increase their contributions to WFP's programmes.
97. The group commended the Government for its commitment to achieving nationwide coverage of its school meal programme and to developing an emergency response capacity to deal with natural disasters, as part of its policy of hosting refugees. WFP contributed logistics and other support to those efforts, and its upcoming CSP was fully integrated into Rwanda's national transformation strategy.
98. Having been acquainted with the initial negotiations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the field visit participants joined international calls for a ceasefire, support for the humanitarian response, and the granting of unhindered humanitarian access in conflict settings, and emphasized the importance of ensuring the protection of humanitarian workers at all times.

Other business

2025/EB.1/6 Final report of the Executive Board working group on the Governance Review

99. Presenting the final report, the Chair of the working group outlined the findings from the group's review of recommendations from the JIU and the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network. Only three of the ten recommendations from the 2023 JIU report on the review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of the New York-based United Nations funds and programmes required further action by WFP – recommendations 6, on harmonizing the terms of reference for all Board secretariats; 7, on the rules of procedure and working methods of the Boards; and 8, on reflecting the Board's roles and responsibilities in the charters, frameworks and terms of reference of WFP's independent and advisory functions and committees.

100. Board members thanked the sitting and previous Presidents of the Board, the Chair and the members of the working group for their work in reviewing the recommendations, and the Executive Board Secretariat for their support throughout the review and their work on the implementation of the recommendations. They welcomed the progress made in adopting more streamlined documentation and shorter agendas for Board sessions, reviewing the format and frequency of informal meetings, and establishing clear guidelines for the development of WFP policies and CSPs. They also expressed satisfaction with decisions regarding the updating of WFP's oversight framework; the holding of elections for Bureau members early in the year; the introduction of a handbook for Bureau members; and the improved induction process for new Board members. However, one Board member expressed disappointment that the exercise had not resulted in greater rationalization of processes, with more coherence, inclusion and efficiency beyond simple changes in procedure.
101. Board members agreed with the proposals for implementing the remaining recommendations, including having Bureau members chair informal Board meetings on items to be subsequently submitted to the Board for decision; maintaining the independence of the WFP Ethics Office and the Office of the Ombudsperson and Mediation Services and updating their terms of reference at the next opportunity to reflect current practice on Board reporting and engagement; and that JIU recommendation 6 be revisited after the New York-based United Nations entities had completed their review of the JIU report. Board members also supported the working group's recommendation that an assessment be conducted upon the conclusion of the review of the JIU report by the New York-based United Nations funds and programmes to review the progress of implementation of the Board-approved governance recommendations and to ensure alignment with decisions taken in New York on the JIU report.
102. Board members said that the review exercise demonstrated that WFP already met many of the JIU benchmarks and demonstrated best practices in the United Nations system. It had also strengthened the Board's ability to reach consensus and achieve positive change and valuable efficiencies. Looking forward to receiving regular updates on the implementation of the remaining recommendations throughout 2025 and beyond, several Board members emphasized the importance of continuously assessing whether the changes made led to the desired results or required further adjustment.
103. The Deputy Executive Director said that the review exercise facilitated greater strategic dialogue, clarified the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and leadership of WFP, and helped build trust between the two.

Reports of the Executive Board sessions

2025/EB.1/7 Summary of the work of the 2024 second regular session of the Executive Board

104. The President extended her thanks to the Rapporteur for preparing the summary of the 2024 second regular session of the Board, noting that the draft document had been circulated for Board member comment in January 2025. The Board approved the summary.

Verification of adopted decisions and recommendations

105. Expressing appreciation to the staff of WFP for their support and to the members and observers of the Board for their collaboration and engagement, 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 during 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.

Closing remarks by the Executive Director

106. Thanking the President and Secretariat of the Board for helping to make this a productive Board session, the Executive Director reasserted WFP's commitment to working effectively and establishing clear strategic priorities and the right conditions for channelling maximum resources and support to its front-line operations. The rigorous cost-efficiency measures being implemented, including a 10 percent reduction in the PSA budget, would maximize the impact of every dollar received, with the ongoing change management programme and GAP reinforcing those efforts. Maintaining the Board's trust and confidence was fundamental, and management was committed to working with the Board in full transparency and with full accountability.
107. As WFP staff faced growing risks and dangers in carrying out their life-saving work in the world's most complex and volatile regions, management was equally committed to adhering to their duty of care to staff and to the millions of people who relied on WFP. The international community must work together to protect the safety and security of humanitarian workers, prevent the growing use of access restrictions, and preserve the space for effective and principled humanitarian action.
108. The Executive Director thanked Board members for their advice, guidance and support as WFP worked towards the achievement of a world free from hunger, and a better future for the people it served.
109. Drawing the session to a close, the President thanked the Executive Director, the list convenors, the Secretariat of the Executive Board and WFP's management and staff for their contributions to the success of the session.

Acronyms

CLTF	Changing Lives Transformation Fund
COSMOS	country office support model optimization and simplification
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAP	global assurance project
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
IOAC	Independent Oversight Advisory Committee
ISC	indirect support cost
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
PSA	programme support and administrative (budget)
PSEA	prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund