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

Executive Board
Annual session
Rome, 23–26 June 2025

Distribution: General
Date: 3 November 2025
Original: English

Agenda item 10
WFP/EB.A/2025/10-C/DRAFT
Summary of the work of the 2025 annual 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 annual session of the Executive Board

Table of contents

Current and future strategic issues

Election for one vacant position on the Bureau and appointment of the Rapporteur

1. Recalling that the positions of convenor and alternate convenor of List C had become vacant, the President invited the Board to approve the appointment of the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia as List C convener and the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil as List C alternate convenor, for the remainder of the term of 2025.

2. The Board was also invited to approve the designation, by List A, of the Alternate Permanent Representative and Chargée d'Affaires of Côte d'Ivoire as Rapporteur for the session.

3. The three proposed appointments were duly approved.

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

4. Thanking Member States for their support, the Executive Director prefaced her opening remarks by reaffirming WFP's commitment to transparency. The organization was navigating an unprecedented funding and geopolitical environment, marked by rising humanitarian needs and shrinking resources. Operating environments were riskier and more complex, and the multilateral system was being eroded. Staff continued to work amid intense conflict, limited resources and considerable personal hardship, as was the case, for example, in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, State of Palestine and Ukraine; in the Sudan, five team members had been killed in an attack on a WFP–UNICEF convoy on 2 June 2025. Despite adversity, staff persisted in delivering food, cash assistance and support programmes, bringing dignity and hope to millions of people.

5. The entire humanitarian sector was underfunded, and WFP faced severe resource gaps, which had led to critical cuts in multiple countries, particularly in Afghanistan, where 8.5 million people had been left without assistance as well as in Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. Despite the bleak outlook, the Executive Director was determined to secure resources for WFP. The strategic plan for 2026–2029 was an invaluable opportunity to respond to the major shifts reshaping the world. The draft plan contained three strategic outcomes: the delivery of large-scale emergency food assistance more tailored to meeting needs through the use of cutting-edge data analysis and technology; the tackling of the root causes of food insecurity to reduce needs and build long-term resilience; and the expansion of partnerships with governments, the private sector and other actors to enhance capacity and effectiveness, including through the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) and WFP's global logistics network.

6. The new strategic plan would also draw together work already under way on corporate efficiency, organizational structures, financial management, workforce planning and resource mobilization. WFP was reviewing its country presence and optimizing its operating model where necessary. The organization already had the lowest overheads in the United Nations system and was reducing the programme support and administrative (PSA) budget by a further 15 percent in 2026 to bring running costs in line with the forecast income. As part of its focus on supporting country offices, WFP was seeking the Board's approval of an allocation of USD 40 million to support country offices' transition to lower funding levels. WFP was also reducing its workforce through a voluntary separation programme, aiming to preserve core capabilities while protecting staff dignity and fulfilling its duty of care. WFP was also seeking Board approval of an allocation of USD 40 million for the stabilization of the workforce in the face of reduced funding.

7. WFP was working to diversify its funding base, maintaining longstanding relationships with many governments while forging new ties with others, and expanding private sector engagement; a five-year resource mobilization strategy was being developed. In spite of

budget pressures, WFP was strengthening its efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

8. The Executive Director reiterated WFP's resolve to rise to the challenges ahead with the right priorities, people and partnerships, calling for unity and continued collaboration to meet the shared goal of a future free from hunger.

9. A number of Board members emphasized the scale and growing complexity of humanitarian crises around the world and how conflict, climate change, economic instability and natural disasters were exacerbating food insecurity. Many highlighted regions that were severely affected, including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Lebanon, Mali, Myanmar, South Sudan, State of Palestine, the Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen.

10. Expressing gratitude for the dedication and bravery of WFP staff, Board members condemned attacks on aid workers and sent their condolences to the loved ones of those who had lost their lives. Many emphasized the need to uphold international humanitarian law, reaffirming their commitment to neutral humanitarian action. One member called for an immediate end to the instrumentalization of humanitarian aid in conflicts.

11. Acknowledging the critical value of life-saving aid, several Board members also welcomed WFP efforts to address the root causes of food insecurity and emphasized the importance of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. Some called on WFP to enhance resilience building, especially for smallholder farmers in areas severely affected by climate change, to reduce future humanitarian needs by building resilient food systems through improved access to technology, training and markets. One member said that technology, including artificial intelligence, had a key role to play in strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of humanitarian interventions as long as it was used responsibly.

12. Given the huge gap between humanitarian needs and the available funding, Board members expressed deep concern about WFP's reduced reach, the downsizing of the workforce and the need for further prioritization in the face of budget constraints. The importance of transparency and clear oversight was stressed, with WFP urged to accelerate implementation of oversight recommendations and exercise compassion and an equitable approach in downsizing the workforce. Some members urged WFP to exhaust all other options before closing any country offices, with one advocating that host governments be consulted in any review process.

13. WFP was called on to diversify its funding sources further, expand its donor base, including greater private sector involvement, and attract more flexible and multi-year funding. Some members thanked donors for their support. One observer drew attention to the impact on WFP operations of sanctions on certain countries and highlighted the potential benefits of diversifying the payment systems and currencies used by WFP.

14. The localization policy received wide support, with Board members advising WFP to strengthen partnerships with local governments, communities and national organizations. Speakers commented on the potential efficiency gains associated with localization and its central role in WFP operations.

15. Several members emphasized the importance of the continuation and strengthening of school meal programmes as both an immediate solution to hunger and a tool for improving educational outcomes.

16. Board members broadly supported the three strategic outcomes of the draft strategic plan for 2026–2029, appreciating its sharper geographic and thematic focus. Some suggested the strengthening of cross-cutting issues like localization, environmental sustainability and gender equality; some also stressed the importance of aligning the plan with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2. One Board member, however, opposed any reference, in any WFP strategic document, to the SDGs, climate change or any element that

could undermine the recognition of individual merit. Many others supported upholding norms and terminology agreed within the United Nations related, for example, to gender equality, disability, inclusion, the SDGs and climate change; several of them expressed concern that disagreement within the Board about language had led to the deferral of consideration, and therefore approval, of certain country strategic plans (CSPs).

17. Many Board members stressed the importance of multilateralism and international solidarity. Global initiatives, such as the Humanitarian Reset and the UN80 reforms, as well as South–South and triangular cooperation were highlighted as vehicles for improved coordination. Several members encouraged WFP to leverage its comparative advantages in areas such as logistics, aviation and data for the provision of shared services, thereby achieving greater efficiency for the humanitarian system.

Operational matters

Oral global overview of humanitarian needs and operational concerns and priorities

18. The Deputy Executive Director warned that at least 319 million people were experiencing acute food insecurity around the world, including 1.9 million in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 5 – more than double the figure in 2024 and the highest number on record. Further deterioration in food security was expected in 13 countries and territories. Conflict, climate-related shocks and economic instability remained key drivers of hunger, while access and funding constraints continued to reinforce each other.

19. Famine risk was high in the Gaza Strip, and famine had been confirmed in the Sudan in 2024 and was expected to spread. Acute food insecurity was also at alarming levels in countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Myanmar, South Sudan and Yemen. In many crisis settings, WFP faced severe operational constraints, including insecurity and physical and bureaucratic access restrictions. Humanitarian personnel were increasingly at risk, including in Yemen, where six WFP staff members remained in detention and one had died in custody. In South Sudan, WFP was operating in just 7 of 11 crisis-affected counties in Upper Nile State after economic decline, flooding and renewed conflict had disrupted access. In Haiti, armed groups controlled 90 percent of Port-au-Prince, and violence was spreading to agricultural areas, threatening food systems.

20. In the Sahel, 53 million people needed food and nutrition assistance and 10 million were displaced – a sixfold increase in two years. Insecurity and attacks on convoys were disrupting supply lines and increasing operational costs. In Burkina Faso, more than 30 localities were inaccessible, and WFP relied heavily on airlifts. At the same time, UNHAS was operating at less than 50 percent of its 2024 capacity. Funding gaps across the region meant that 5 million people risked being cut off, with aid gaps driving 20 percent of new displacement.

21. In Ukraine, 5 million people were acutely food insecure, half of them living near the front lines. The fragile economy and high food prices were increasing vulnerability, while a volatile security environment hindered access.

22. Funding shortfalls were severely impacting many other life-saving operations, including in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Syrian Arab Republic. In Eastern Africa, rising refugee needs and funding shortfalls had forced cuts to beneficiary numbers and rations. One million refugees had been removed from WFP lists in Uganda, while rations in Kenya had been reduced to 30 percent. Refugee operations across the region were nearing collapse.

23. WFP nonetheless continued to invest in resilience, including in Chad and the Philippines, and in anticipatory action, with notable examples in Bangladesh, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. A new logistics hub had opened in Barbados to facilitate disaster

responses across the Caribbean, where up to 500,000 people could need emergency assistance during the 2025 hurricane season.

24. WFP appealed to Member States to promote humanitarian principles and legal accountability, support efforts to reach political solutions to end conflict, advocate for safe humanitarian access, increase funding flexibility, and invest in resilience and early warning.

25. Following the Deputy Executive Director’s presentation, the five WFP regional directors provided updates on food insecurity, challenges and priorities in their regions. In the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe, 38 million people were food insecure. Escalating conflict and shrinking humanitarian space, particularly in Gaza, had added a new layer of complexity. Airspace closures were disrupting operations, while rising fuel and food prices were hitting the most vulnerable. In Western Africa, a region severely affected by global funding cuts, food insecurity and displacement had quadrupled. Funding had fallen by 50 percent compared with 2024, and for some emergency operations, by 80 percent. Some 86 million people faced acute food insecurity in Asia and the Pacific, the region with the world’s highest proportion of child stunting and wasting. With WFP support, Bangladesh had reached 628,000 people through anticipatory action. WFP was also working with international financial institutions in Afghanistan and Myanmar to expand safety nets and build resilience. In Eastern and Southern Africa, 122 million people were food insecure, 48 percent of them in IPC phase 3 or worse. Food prices had risen by up to 500 percent in the Sudan and South Sudan. The Sudan hosted the world’s largest displacement crisis, and disease outbreaks and erratic climate conditions were worsening needs. National governments were increasingly leading responses, yet funding shortfalls were resulting in cuts to assistance. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the crisis in Haiti had regional implications, with 1.3 million people displaced and WFP facing a USD 460 million funding gap. Despite strong government engagement, more support was needed to implement the USD 600 million workplan for the region in 2025.

26. Board members commended WFP for continuing to operate in high-risk settings, recognizing its adaptability and adherence to humanitarian principles despite major constraints, including shrinking humanitarian space, rising costs and deepening funding gaps. Several members emphasized the importance of supporting WFP staff in dangerous environments, calling for greater attention to duty of care and mental health. One member asked what measures WFP was taking to safeguard staff welfare during restructuring and workforce reductions. WFP was also urged to ensure that cuts to oversight, risk management and security functions did not undermine operational integrity.

27. Board members welcomed WFP’s leadership in the humanitarian reset and urged it to continue driving United Nations reform, including through the UN80 process. One delegation asked how systemic change could be accelerated; others sought insight into the link between anticipatory action and national early warning systems, and the agencies that WFP could work with to support anticipatory action.

28. Many speakers stressed the need to diversify funding sources, including through innovative financing, South–South cooperation, climate finance and partnerships with governments and the private sector. Some called for a shift towards more sustainable, nationally led approaches. One Board member raised concerns that funding shortfalls in Africa could lead to diminished access. Another questioned how WFP would align its global fundraising targets with revised United Nations humanitarian plans and how country offices were adapting to the reprioritized plans.

29. Many members reaffirmed support for WFP’s principled approach in Gaza, and further information was sought on how aid delivery to the territory was being safeguarded and what steps could be taken to improve long-term food security. One observer described a new initiative aimed at delivering assistance directly to civilians in Gaza.

30. More information was sought on lessons learned from recent improvements in access to the Sudan and what additional support was needed beyond funding; WFP's plans to scale up operations and foster resilience in Haiti; and how access was expected to evolve across regions, particularly as beneficiary numbers were reduced.

31. Noting the importance of impartial data in countering disinformation, one member praised WFP's role in needs assessments, including its contributions to the IPC. That Board member also expressed concern about the politicization of aid and the use of commercial contractors in contexts such as Gaza and the Sudan, cautioning that such practices could undermine humanitarian principles and public trust.

32. There was strong support among many Board members for WFP's work on school meals and disability inclusion. One Board member asked about lessons learned on disability inclusion, the support that WFP needed to continue its leadership in that area and examples of best practices in the area of national school meal programmes. Many speakers reaffirmed the need to support WFP through flexible funding and humanitarian diplomacy. Continued dialogue between WFP and Member States was seen as essential to addressing rising humanitarian needs.

33. Thanking Board members for their support, the regional directors responded to the points raised. WFP was sustaining humanitarian access in Haiti through community engagement, negotiations with local security actors and stringent monitoring of aid distributions. Financing tools in that region included the Green Climate Fund, seed funding and debt swap arrangements to support investment in social sectors. In Eastern and Southern Africa, school meal programmes were being transferred to government ownership in some countries; acute funding shortages had required the vulnerability-based prioritization of assistance for other operations. In Asia and the Pacific, country-level responses were designed to address urgent gaps and foster long-term investment. In Western Africa, a lack of food assistance was hampering access negotiations, leading to a reduction in the humanitarian space. National governments, however, continued to expand home-grown school feeding initiatives, including a successful nationally led programme in Benin. In the Middle East, the provision of large-scale assistance during humanitarian pauses in Gaza had demonstrated WFP's key role in addressing hunger. Ongoing donor support would prove critical in enabling sustained high-volume access to that territory. No evidence of aid diversion had been found; teams continued to monitor and any potential issues would be reported for investigation.

34. Noting that additional time would be needed to answer all the questions raised, the Deputy Executive Director suggested that further details could be provided in a future operational update. He reaffirmed WFP's commitment to the United Nations development system reform process, highlighting efforts to streamline operations, strengthen country-level prioritization, and maintain robust data collection to inform targeting. While acknowledging the difficult choices required in the current funding environment, he emphasized the importance of sustaining principled humanitarian action and of protecting WFP's leverage in negotiations.

Policy issues

2025/EB.A/2 Localization policy

35. Presenting the policy, management emphasized the importance of localization in furthering WFP's aim of supporting locally led solutions and placing local and national actors at the heart of its response as leaders and owners in food security and nutrition interventions. They highlighted the paradigm shift called for and noted that the policy had been informed by extensive consultations with WFP's staff and partners around the world, including insights and support from Board members. A costed implementation plan accompanied the policy.

36. Board members welcomed the policy's clear objectives, which they saw as contributing to the ongoing transition to a more inclusive, effective and sustainable international aid system and to WFP's shift from an implementing to an enabling role. Aligned with WFP's strategic plan, and complementing other policies and strategies, the policy leveraged WFP's comparative advantages and contributed to phased exit strategies that built on national and local capacity gains.

37. Aspects of the policy highlighted by Board members included the recognition of local and national actors as first responders and key partners in achieving food security and nutrition outcomes; the strengthened engagement with community-based organizations, including those led by and for women, young people, persons with disabilities, refugees and Indigenous Peoples; the emphasis on following a more collaborative and less transactional approach to partnerships with local organizations; the engagement of national, local and community actors in shaping local value chains; and the plans for risk management and risk sharing, including with donor countries.

38. Encouraging WFP to continue these efforts, Board members also emphasized the importance of adapting the implementation of the policy to the specific conditions in each country; closely monitoring and reporting on policy implementation, using clearly defined measurable outcomes and indicators, and making adjustments as necessary; developing risk-sharing tools and guidance on risk management while leaving room for local initiative; and addressing the persistent problems linked to the management of cooperating partners, including by defining a clear-cut strategic approach, criteria and templates for the selection and contracting of partners and by coordinating cooperating partner management with United Nations and other partners.

39. Recognizing that the policy's ambitious targets would take time to achieve, particularly in the current complex and uncertain environment, Board members recommended that the localization process be implemented as a gradual cultural shift towards increased local decision-making and responsibility, and as a cross-cutting priority in all WFP operations. Throughout this process, Board members urged WFP to maintain the highest standards of transparency and accountability, ensuring strong assurance processes while supporting capacity sharing and high-quality funding for local partners. Several members highlighted donors' responsibility for facilitating implementation of the localization agenda, including by providing flexible and multi-year funding.

40. Looking forward to receiving updates on the progress achieved and the lessons learned during implementation of the policy, and encouraging WFP to continue reporting promptly on any problems that arose, Board members sought further information on the new financial and contractual modalities for local partnerships; and the planned operational road maps for the implementation of the four policy objectives.

41. Management took note of the points raised.

Special address by Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

42. Introducing the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Executive Director commended his leadership, advocacy and vision and thanked him for his strong support to WFP and the energy he had brought to advancing the humanitarian reset.

43. In his address, the Under-Secretary-General described a humanitarian landscape marked by increasing needs, shrinking funding, and growing indifference and impunity. Humanitarian workers were operating under intense strain, often at great personal risk. WFP remained central to the global humanitarian response and continued to work in some of the world's most difficult and dangerous environments, bringing its unparalleled logistical

capacity, resilience programming and operational reach. Against this backdrop, the humanitarian reset emphasized the need for prioritization, greater efficiency and innovation, increased localization and renewed defence of humanitarian principles. WFP played a leading role in all areas of the reset, particularly in field coordination, innovation, anticipatory action and the protection of humanitarian space.

44. As funding levels were falling far short of what was required to meet basic needs, the Under-Secretary-General urged Member States to continue supporting humanitarian principles, strengthen protections for aid workers, speak out against access constraints and disinformation, and step up to address funding gaps by providing multi-year, flexible funding for WFP and other humanitarian agencies.

45. Board members expressed support for the humanitarian reset and emphasized the need for targeted, life-saving interventions centred on the most vulnerable people. They underscored the importance of shifting decision-making to local actors, protecting civilians and humanitarian personnel, and upholding international humanitarian law. Humanitarian diplomacy should secure access and promote long-term solutions for vulnerable communities, including by preventing forced displacement. There were calls for more effective responses to geopolitical challenges and closer links between emergency relief and resilience-building. Predictable and adequate funding was essential, not only to respond to global emergencies, but also to sustain innovation, efficiency and coordination across the humanitarian system.

46. Further information was sought in relation to which reforms were most likely to deliver immediate impact; how agencies and donors could better align their responses with reprioritized response plans; what measures could strengthen in-country coordination; what trade-offs were associated with scaling up pooled funding; how sustainable financing for common services could be ensured; and how enhanced coordination mechanisms could strengthen protections for humanitarian personnel.

47. In response, the Under-Secretary-General welcomed Member States' engagement with the humanitarian reset. Measures already undertaken included the streamlining of humanitarian response plans and the reduction in the number of prioritized crises from 28 to 21, which had facilitated the more efficient resource allocation. The scaling up of multipurpose cash, the responsible use of artificial intelligence and blockchain, and improved data management and sharing all offered potential for long-term enhancement of the humanitarian system.

48. Closer coordination among donors could also support humanitarian action, together with more effective burden-sharing, streamlined bureaucratic procedures for mobilizing resources and the elimination of duplicate initiatives and programmes. Donors were encouraged to avoid conditionalities that created inefficiency and to incentivize humanitarian agencies to focus on their core mandates. It was vital to understand future funding trends, in light of the evolving priorities of some major donors.

49. With regard to humanitarian country teams, the Under-Secretary-General advocated for stronger in-country leadership and enhanced authority for humanitarian and resident coordinators. WFP played a vital role in developing future leadership in the humanitarian sphere. He also reiterated the aim of halving the number of clusters, while maintaining necessary infrastructure. On pooled funding, he acknowledged trade-offs and called for improved operational performance to justify increased investment. Regarding common services, he commended WFP's leadership and urged continued efforts in shared logistics and infrastructure. On protection, he emphasized the importance of Member States' advocacy and direct engagement with parties on the ground, citing the Sudan and the Gaza Strip as areas requiring immediate action to safeguard humanitarian personnel.

Annual reports

2025/EB.A/3 Annual performance report for 2024

50. Management presented the report, which charted strong progress towards the achievement of WFP's high-level targets, but with some significant challenges, often due to funding gaps and access issues. In 2024, WFP had also adopted a "one global headquarters" organizational structure, introduced a new management accountability framework, and continued to implement the global assurance project and other initiatives aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of its work.

51. Board members commended WFP for the results achieved and the transparent report,[1] which would inform the formulation of the next strategic plan. They welcomed in particular the speed with which WFP had responded to many sudden-onset crises and adapted its operations to changing circumstances; its prioritization of life-saving interventions while also seeking to contribute to resilience and sustainable livelihoods; and its work on strengthening national institutions, programmes and systems, such as those for emergency preparedness, social protection, food systems and school meal interventions. Appreciation was also expressed for WFP's progress in mainstreaming the humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach and promoting conflict sensitivity and peace outcomes; providing mandated and on-demand services, which had a valuable role in the humanitarian reset and broader United Nations reform initiatives; and its support for smallholder farmers in gaining access to institutional and other markets, including through home-grown school feeding programmes.

52. While applauding WFP's increasingly efficient use of resources, several Board members expressed concern in relation to the persistent funding shortfalls and the decline in flexible contributions, urging WFP to continue its efforts to diversify and expand the funding base, including by engaging more with non-traditional donor countries, fostering stronger partnerships, and raising awareness of the dangers and risks of failing to address issues around the world. Other concerns related to the decrease in the proportion of beneficiaries with disabilities receiving assistance, and the nutritional inadequacy of WFP's in-kind food transfers.

53. To address these and other issues, a number of Board members encouraged WFP to increase its efforts in disability inclusion and maintain its inclusive approach to the provision of aid; explore ways of improving the nutritional value of its emergency food assistance; mainstream anticipatory action into its operations; integrate its country capacity strengthening activities into its emergency response interventions, including in collaboration with partners; expand its local and regional procurement initiatives, including with smallholder farmers; and accelerate the implementation of outstanding recommendations from oversight exercises.

54. Thanking Board members for their support, management outlined the results of recent efforts to diversify the funding base: 53 programme countries had contributed a total of USD 1 billion to WFP operations in 2024; contributions from the private sector had increased by 30 percent; and USD 60 million had been mobilized through debt swap arrangements. WFP was exploring additional ways of benefiting from debt swaps, blended finance, and concessional loans and grants. Turning to other points raised, management said that efforts to improve the nutritional adequacy of food rations included food fortification initiatives; WFP was adjusting the contract modalities and payment terms for procurement, particularly from smallholder farmers; and there had been some progress in the implementation of outstanding oversight recommendations.

[1] The United States of America has disassociated itself from this report. For further details, please refer to the United States' official statement on the annual performance report.

Operational matters (*continued*)

Update on the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service

55. Introducing the item, the Assistant Executive Director, Programme Operations Department highlighted the critical support provided by UNHAS to WFP operations and the wider humanitarian community and called for sustained and flexible donor support to ensure the future of the service. The Chief of the Aviation Service presented the update, summarizing UNHAS operations in 2024 and describing cost-saving measures introduced in response to funding shortfalls.

56. Board members commended the professionalism, dedication and courage of UNHAS staff and acknowledged the critical role of the service in enabling safe, timely and equitable humanitarian access to people in hard-to-reach and insecure areas. Aspects such as the high user satisfaction rate, implementation of efficiency measures and contributions to the broader humanitarian response were noted. Commending UNHAS' management as a model of governance, one member encouraged WFP to share its experience and know-how with other humanitarian operators.

57. Some Board members raised concerns about the widening gap between funding needs and contributions and called for more predictable, flexible and sustainable financing, including through increased support to the centralized funding mechanism. Several highlighted the importance of the neutrality, independence and safety of UNHAS operations. Others encouraged WFP to continue exploring potential efficiency gains, including through fleet optimization, route rationalization and the strategic use of digital technologies. WFP was encouraged to clarify its approach to prioritizing operations, promote financial transparency and strengthen burden-sharing across humanitarian and development actors.

58. More information was sought regarding the cost recovery strategy, the rationale for the increased 2025 budget requirements, plans to ensure operational continuity amid constrained funding, and the positioning of UNHAS within the humanitarian reset and other reforms. Members requested additional financial details in future reports and sought clarity on the strategy to ensure the long-term sustainability of UNHAS operations, such as those in Haiti. One member asked about the average fleet age, aircraft turnaround time and the potential role of commercial aviation alternatives. Another encouraged greater inclusion of diplomatic representations in field-level steering committees to strengthen coordination and oversight.

59. Management clarified that the 6 percent increase in the UNHAS budget compared with 2023 was primarily due to rising war risk insurance premiums. Cost-cutting measures had lowered the funding gap from USD 200 million in February 2025 to USD 53.7 million in May 2025, with the current budget amounting to USD 307 million – down from USD 383 million in 2023. Resource mobilization efforts included promoting the use of global-level pooled funds and outreach to the private sector to diversify the UNHAS funding base. Cost recovery had increased and now covered 30 percent of UNHAS operational costs. The centralized funding mechanism currently accounted for only 9 percent of UNHAS funding; however, it was critical in enabling WFP to sustain essential services during funding gaps, such as helicopter operations in Haiti.

Security report

60. The Director of the Security Division reported that 2024 had seen the highest number of safety and security incidents in WFP's history and a marked increase in fatalities, serious injuries and abductions. Crime remained the biggest operational threat, followed by civil unrest and environmental hazards such as extreme weather. Most incidents had occurred in Eastern Africa, although the greatest year-on-year increase had been observed in Western Africa.

61. An internal audit of WFP security in the field had concluded that major improvements were needed. The resulting seven recommendations were being addressed through 27 actions. Areas for improvement included governance and resource allocation, risk management and compliance, data systems and digitalization, and field-level partnerships. The multi-year security strengthening programme launched in September 2024 was aligned with audit findings, broader institutional reforms and the localization agenda. While the programme was primarily funded from internal resources, additional support was needed, particularly for training and capacity-building for cooperating partners.

62. Looking ahead, innovative approaches were needed to sustain humanitarian access and protect personnel amid political fragmentation, misinformation, technological challenges and declining resources.

63. Board members expressed concern about the record number of incidents in 2024 and offered condolences for the loss of life. They condemned all attacks on humanitarian workers, their premises and assets. Members welcomed the security strengthening programme and its alignment with audit recommendations, the duty of care framework and the localization agenda. Several voiced concern about the heightened risks to contractors and partners and requested details on measures to strengthen their protection. They stressed the importance of equitable partnerships and closer collaboration with host governments to ensure the safety of humanitarian actors.

64. The use of innovative technology, including predictive tools powered by artificial intelligence, was welcomed. Members requested updates on lessons learned and associated cost savings, and called for the integration of security data into operational decision-making. Funding sustainability was a key concern. Members questioned the reliance on temporary resources and sought clarity on whether the duty of care framework would be integrated into core funding and whether core funding levels for the security strengthening programme could be maintained amid budgetary pressures.

65. In response, the Director confirmed that the security strengthening programme budget would be reviewed in the light of funding constraints, with a view to increasing core funding coverage. WFP was leveraging digitalization and headquarters consolidation to adapt to staff reductions, and the division was prioritizing investments in partner security capacities, although further funding was needed.

66. Management warned that cuts to the budget of the Department of Safety and Security would have a significant impact on WFP operations. WFP would endeavour to sustain its investments in safety and security while also fostering inter-agency collaboration, devolving responsibilities to country offices and strengthening oversight at headquarters. Workforce alignment aimed to shift resources to the field, including for security, in order to strengthen delivery at the point of impact.

Organizational and administrative matters

2025/EB.A/4 Annual update on progress in implementing the recommendations from the strategic evaluation on WFP's work on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

67. Presenting this first annual update, management emphasized that ensuring protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) remained a core concern, integral to the operational effectiveness and credibility of WFP's mission to combat hunger and promote food security while ensuring the safety and dignity of the people it assisted.

68. Welcoming management's transparent reporting, Board members commended WFP's robust measures for preventing and mitigating sexual exploitation and abuse, and its leading role in PSEA initiatives at the inter-agency level. They applauded the considerable

progress made in recent years, expressing particular appreciation for aspects such as the newly established PSEA Unit in the Office of the Executive Director; systematic engagement with PSEA focal points in regional and country offices; the issuance of guidance and tools for PSEA capacity strengthening; and the inclusion of PSEA as a mandatory element in CSPs and the performance assessments of country directors. They also welcomed WFP's forthcoming corporate strategy on PSEA and sexual harassment (PSEAH).

69. Board members emphasized the importance of allocating sufficient core resources to PSEAH at the global, regional and country levels and called for this work to be protected from budget cuts. Expressing surprise at the low levels of reporting on SEA in the field relative to WFP's scale and risk profile, they recommended strengthening community-based reporting mechanisms, emphasizing the importance of pursuing inter-agency efforts for greater impact.

70. Other recommendations included further strengthening collaboration, pooling resources and harmonizing tools for risk analysis, community engagement and partner capacity assessments with other agencies, including by leveraging the Executive Director's role as PSEAH Champion for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and sustaining support to downstream partners. WFP was also encouraged to endorse the Common Approach on sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment and take active steps to use the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme. More clarity was sought on some of the actions reported as "closed".

71. Management welcomed the remarks made and reaffirmed WFP's commitment to PSEAH and its full integration into corporate risk management processes and systems. They appealed for Board members' continued support, emphasizing serious concerns in relation to WFP's reduced capacity, especially front-line protection expertise, to operationalize this work owing to severe budget cuts.

Oversight functions

2025/EB.A/5 Appointment of one member to the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee

72. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Argentina, chair of the selection panel for the appointment of members of the IOAC approved by the Board at its 2024 first regular session, recalled that the first term of Ms Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas of Uruguay would expire on 14 November 2025. Following established procedure, the selection panel had concluded that Ms Tucci Bartsiotas fully met the requirements to be reappointed to the IOAC and thus recommended that the incumbent be confirmed for a second and final term of three years, from 14 November 2025 to 13 November 2028.

73. The Board approved the reappointment of Ms Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas as proposed.

Financial and budgetary matters

2025/EB.A/6 Audited annual accounts, 2024

74. Following management's presentation of the 2024 financial statements, the President of the Bundesrechnungshof summarized the achievements of the External Auditor, recent audit results and future challenges facing WFP. Concerns were cited in areas including WFP's accountability for last-mile distribution; its definition and interpretation of certain budgetary terms; the delegation of authority to senior managers; and the detail provided in the notes to the financial statements. The External Auditor was also concerned at the high number of outstanding recommendations from external and internal audits.

75. An unmodified audit opinion had been issued for the 2024 financial statements. The External Auditor noted that expenses related to cooperating partner commodity distributions had been insufficiently disclosed and that the accounting data necessary to

audit those expenses were lacking. Headquarters responsibility for the management of government cooperating partners remained unclear. Findings in relation to human resources had indicated rising staff costs in 2024 despite a decrease in headcount; fragmentation in the payroll process; payments of almost USD 12 million made to unassigned staff members; and ex gratia payments of USD 9.2 million made in relation to termination indemnities that were not provided for in employment contracts or the staff rules and regulations.

76. Looking ahead, the External Auditor provided his view on the challenges WFP was facing, particularly in relation to workforce reduction, the new global headquarters model and the viability of WFP's current country presence. Potential efficiency gains could be made through greater standardization, increased inter-agency cooperation, more efficient oversight processes and a sharper focus on WFP's mandate, based on the organization's comparative advantages.

77. Board members welcomed the audited financial statements and the External Auditor's thorough review of internal controls. Some commended WFP for its efforts to strengthen internal oversight in accordance with the internal control framework and called for the gradual implementation of external audit recommendations. Other members stressed the importance of WFP continuing to work towards the progressive integration of certain recommendations made by the External Auditor in order to remedy shortcomings and achieve satisfactory cost-effectiveness. One Board member expressed concern with regard to continued shortcomings in transparency, oversight and risk management, and the limited implementation of audit recommendations, calling for a road map to guide implementation. The delegate also requested a detailed breakdown of staff cost components to explain the cost increases identified by the External Auditor; a reassessment of the staff reassignment process, including benchmarking with other United Nations entities; a clarification of cooperating partner management responsibilities; and the establishment of a sustainable assurance framework based on the global assurance project. Long-term field-level arrangements should reflect multi-year funding and the terms under which field-level agreements could be amended or extended should be clarified.

78. Management welcomed the unmodified audit opinion, reiterating its unwavering commitment to accountability and transparency, and reaffirmed its commitment to implementing all audit recommendations, with priority given to those with critical impact on the financial statements and residual risk. Delays in implementing certain recommendations were linked to system enhancements and issuance of new normative guidance that required extended timeframes, organizational restructuring, and resource constraints, but recent progress had been made, including a reduction in outstanding management oversight actions across regional offices.

79. Despite a forecasted deficit of USD 2 billion for 2025, WFP remained in a relatively strong financial position, with reserves available to mitigate operational pressures. WFP was committed to improving transparency and accountability and its cooperation with partners and was drawing up plans to address long-term structural challenges such as information technology systems integration and compliance with International Public Sector Accounting Standard 48 on transfer expenses.

80. Detailed disclosures on staff costs and cooperating partner operations would be included in the 2025 financial statements. The observed trends in rising staff costs alongside declining headcount were now reversing. WFP had achieved a 25 percent reduction in outstanding internal audit recommendations in recent months. The organization was mainstreaming elements of the global assurance project into its normal risk management practices and clarifying and strengthening oversight responsibilities in line with the "three lines" model reaffirmed in the new one global headquarters structure, which would reinforce the shift towards more strategic, streamlined oversight at all levels.

81. In closing, the President of the Board expressed the Board's appreciation to the outgoing External Auditor, Mr Scheller, for his important contributions and his commitment to the success of WFP. The President asked the Chief of Staff to provide regular updates on the implementation of audit recommendations to the Bureau.

2025/EB.A/7 Update to the management plan (2025–2027)

82. The update presented WFP's response to a reduced funding forecast and included a proposal for allocating resources from the unearmarked portion of the General Fund to replenish the country office safety net, cover costs associated with workforce management, and replenish the self-insurance "captive" used to cover war-related commodity losses.

83. Commending management for the rapid response to an increasingly challenging and complex funding environment, Board members endorsed the proposed measures for containing WFP's running costs, including by reducing the workforce and streamlining the organization's internal structure. In making these changes, management should avoid negative impacts on WFP's accountability and oversight functions, its operations, its ability to respond to crises rapidly and at scale, and its expertise in critical areas. Emphasizing the importance of involving the Board throughout the internal reform process, members recommended that management engage with WFP's humanitarian partners, identify the ways in which proposed changes could improve efficiency, and continuously review – and report on – the effects of the changes, particularly for country offices.

84. Given the global outlook of limited funding and growing needs, Board members encouraged management to continue prioritizing crisis response and life-saving activities; strengthening the evidence base for WFP interventions; and pursuing innovative financing solutions, particularly for flexible and multi-year funding. As this was the second year in which a budget adjustment to the management plan was required, a number of Board members recommended that WFP carry out a wider review of its financial and business model to ensure that it aligned with the challenging funding environment. The formulation of a new WFP strategic plan, the UN80 initiative and the ongoing Humanitarian Reset provided opportunities for addressing long-standing issues and defining new ways of working across the United Nations, and Board members were ready to engage in those efforts.

85. Board members sought additional information on contingency plans for responding to further cuts in WFP's funding; the reasons for the rise in support costs within the CSPs; the data and monitoring mechanisms used to assess WFP's work on resilience and the root causes of food insecurity; the collection of disaggregated data; the measures taken to enhance the sustainability of the self-insurance fund; and the lessons learned and challenges encountered during the implementation of WFP's internal change processes. In relation to workforce reduction, one Board member urged WFP to ensure that termination payments were made strictly in line with staff rules and regulations and that all unassigned staff be given at least temporary duty while receiving pay from WFP.

86. Responding to these concerns, management confirmed that if funding were to fall short of the USD 6.4 billion funding forecast, WFP had a healthy balance in the PSA Equalization Account that could cover the difference between the indirect support cost income and the PSA. The termination package paid to long-term employees on short-term contracts had been made to give equal treatment to long-term employees regardless of their contract type, and deployments to temporary assignments were actively sought for unassigned employees when it was possible and cost-effective to do so. An assessment of the costs and benefits of the organizational restructuring initiative was in progress, and the results would be shared with the Board once available.

87. WFP operations in South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen accounted for the highest increases in implementation and direct support costs. Investments in resilience and root causes were made through CSPs and reported on, with disaggregated data, in annual country reports and the annual performance report.

2025/EB.A/8 Report on the utilization of WFP's strategic financing mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2024)

88. Management reported an increase in country offices' use of internal project lending arrangements and the Immediate Response Account (IRA) in 2024, while the volume and value of food delivered to country offices from the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) had declined. Advances from the IRA for Preparedness activities had reached the ceiling of USD 6 million, and demand for advances was expected to rise in 2025 and 2026; management was therefore seeking the Board's approval to set the annual ceiling for preparedness activities at USD 10 million.

89. Emphasizing the value of advance financing in facilitating rapid, efficient and effective emergency response, Board members endorsed WFP's use of strategic financing mechanisms in 2024 and encouraged management to continue to explore the potential for establishing additional mechanisms, including to support anticipatory action, and in collaboration with other actors, such as through the Changing Lives Transformation Fund. One member suggested that the development of the new strategic plan provided opportunities for such exploration.

90. Board members recognized the need to accept a degree of risk when using advance financing, and acknowledged that donors and other countries should share that risk. As the IRA was a multilateral and revolving fund, WFP was requested to communicate promptly and transparently with the Board and donors on the IRA support provided to a country office or operation.

91. Welcoming the growing share of GCMF commodities procured locally and regionally, Board members encouraged management to maintain this momentum and to continue its efforts to enhance the GCMF, particularly in relation to procurement and supply chains. One member sought management's views on the role of WFP's strategic financing mechanisms in the reform of the humanitarian system, and potential synergies with similar mechanisms used by its humanitarian partners.

92. Thanking Board members for their support, management reaffirmed WFP's commitment to managing risks conservatively and increasing the visibility of its use of flexible funding, including the IRA. WFP and its United Nations partners were discussing potential synergies and the pooling of resources for the advance financing of operations.

Organizational and administrative matters (*continued*)

Address by staff representative bodies to the Board

93. The President of the Global Staff Union (GSU) thanked the Executive Director for agreeing to the expansion of the former Professional Staff Association into the GSU, which represented all WFP employees worldwide, regardless of their contractual status.

94. The main cause of concern for many employees was the ongoing workforce reduction, particularly in relation to the fairness of decision-making, the ways in which decisions were communicated, and the likely operational consequences of losing highly experienced employees while WFP was still defining a vision for its future.

95. A recent workforce sample survey had found low levels of confidence in the ability of the leadership team to guide WFP through current and future challenges, and the GSU sought greater involvement in the decisions that affected their members.

96. Areas of particular concern included the development of new rules and regulations and their inconsistent application across WFP; the lack of explanation regarding why certain measures were adopted or abandoned; the unclear rationale for deciding which employees to separate from WFP; and the treatment of national staff, long-term consultants and employees facing significant events in their private lives. Specific issues included the treatment of employees who had been evacuated from Gaza but were now being asked to return or lose their incomes – despite the situation remaining beyond critical; and no involvement of employees in the ongoing review of more than 30 country offices for potential downsizing or closure.

97. The General Secretary of the Union of General Service Staff (UGSS) thanked the Human Resources Division for their support throughout the year, and shared her members' concerns regarding the growing humanitarian needs and dwindling resources around the world, appealing to donors to maintain and increase their support for WFP. UGSS members applauded the Executive Director's advocacy on behalf of the world's vulnerable people, and supported her statement condemning the use of food as a political weapon. They also thanked her for extending hybrid working arrangements until the end of 2025.

98. UGSS members welcomed the establishment of a redeployment task force and an ad hoc framework to guide the workforce reduction process, but were concerned that managers were abolishing encumbered positions without considering the order of retention; long-standing general service staff were the repository of institutional knowledge and skills at headquarters, while staff in other categories were reassigned or left WFP.

99. Employees also had issues with the handling of allegations of misconduct made to the Office of Inspections and Investigations, which often took a long time to respond and frequently dismissed complaints for lack of evidence, while the reporting employees lacked access to the evidence that they knew existed. Allegations made by employees involved in separate performance management processes were also often dismissed, while some employees against whom an allegation had been made were suspended from their employment with WFP for long periods before their cases were eventually found to be unsubstantiated.

100. Thanking the speakers for their comments, the Executive Director reiterated leadership's commitment to working with the GSU and the UGSS in the coming months. Management echoed this commitment and undertook to work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on broadening the membership of the UGSS so as to mirror that of the GSU.

Oversight functions (*continued*)

2025/EB.A/9 Annual report of the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee

101. Presenting the report, the Chair of the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC) highlighted the progress made by WFP – despite immense operational and financial pressures – in areas such as risk management, internal audit, investigations, accountability and ethics. While there were areas that required significant improvement, no material weaknesses that would seriously compromise the overall achievement of WFP objectives had been identified. He highlighted four key areas that required close attention: the need to tackle the root causes of recurring audit and evaluation findings; risks related to the large-scale reorganization and concurrent implementation of organization-wide initiatives; transformation of the technology architecture and infrastructure for greater efficiency and oversight; and the need for organization-wide efforts to tackle the increasing trend of cases requiring investigation.

102. Thanking the IOAC for its work, Board members took note of the committee's recommendations, especially those related to coordination among the oversight functions, follow-up of evaluation recommendations and oversight of cooperating partners. One

Board member highlighted the recommendation that management should review the timetable for the implementation of the global assurance project, ensure coherence between that project and the reorganization process, and cross-check, with the findings of independent oversight functions, the results of self-assessment of the global assurance project implementation by high risk country offices. The delegate also posed a number of questions about the IOAC's assessment of WFP's approach to managing major funding cuts; how WFP was managing government partners and implementing the audit recommendations on spot checks; and the practical impact of funding cuts in relation to risk officers.

103. One member expressed concern at perceived discrepancies between the formal audit opinion and oral statements made by the External Auditor.

104. Responding to the points raised, the Chair of the IOAC noted that the External Auditor focused primarily on the quality of WFP's financial statements but was also able to provide recommendations and observations in other areas; strong collaboration and communication between the External Auditor, the other oversight functions and WFP management was key to ensuring that recommendations were adapted and useful to WFP. On funding, the reorganization was a crucial step towards preparing WFP for the future; other promising avenues included the pursuit of non-traditional funding sources and innovative financing. Risks related to funding cuts should be clearly understood by donors and Member States, who should be aware that further investment in strengthening WFP governance would be needed despite the cuts. There was scope for WFP to increase efforts to enhance the management of government cooperating partners, consolidate work on monitoring through a centralized unit and quantify the budget required to maintain global assurance project standards. The monitoring of the global assurance project implementation through country office self-assessment should be triangulated with findings from other oversight functions. The IOAC would review plans to retain the capacity of the risk officer network in the face of budget cuts in its July meeting.

105. WFP management added that the new accountability model would strengthen the oversight capacity of country directors by clearly assigning responsibilities and streamlining processes and resource allocations. On the increase in cases of misconduct needing investigation, WFP would continue to prioritize efforts to address such issues and provide a safe environment for all. The importance of sequencing and coordinating major corporate initiatives was noted.

106. Management promised to respond on the issue of technology infrastructure at a later stage.

2025/EB.A/10 Annual report of the Inspector General and note by the Executive Director

107. Presenting her report, the Inspector General said that specific issues, often recurring, had been identified in some areas of governance, risk management and control processes. If left unaddressed, they could compromise the achievement of WFP's objectives. At the same time, the report cited some positive practices, which could be considered for replication throughout WFP. The Inspector General outlined the work of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in 2024 for both the internal audit function, operationalized through the Office of Internal Audit, and the investigation function, operationalized through the Office of Inspections and Investigations. Looking to the future, she raised a number of questions related to the workload of the two offices and the safeguarding of oversight in light of funding shortfalls.

108. Management presented the note by the Executive Director, in which she took note of the report's conclusions and reaffirmed accountability, transparency in resource use, and strong assurance and risk-management processes as high priorities for WFP. These would be

further strengthened with the ongoing organizational changes, the new accountability framework and full implementation of the global assurance project.

109. Board members stressed the crucial nature of the function of the Inspector General, especially during the reorganization. It was vital that the oversight functions were accorded the human and financial resources that they needed and were able to maintain their independence and the quality of their work. Some members asked how management would strengthen the control environment in the face of resource constraints, including ensuring that the global assurance project implementation was adequately resourced. One member invited management and OIG to present clear budget scenarios, showing the related implications.

110. Several members noted that, despite WFP’s commendable performance in terms of nutrition, the strengthening of community resilience and support to national programmes, there were persistent weaknesses in areas such as risk management, community-based targeting, cash-based transfers, identity management, programme monitoring and reporting, and the oversight of cooperating partners. Members also expressed concern about recurring audit findings, which pointed to systematic weaknesses in risk management and internal systems; the overdue implementation of audit recommendations; and the number of audits given the rating “major improvement needed”. More needed to be done to systematize lessons learned and accelerate institutional uptake.

111. Some members welcomed the strategic direction proposed, while others highlighted specific areas that needed attention. They advocated strengthening information technology governance, data protection and cybersecurity; enhancing anticipatory action and local procurement mechanisms; ensuring alignment of the global assurance project with country level actions and global assurance standards; clarifying monitoring responsibilities across services; and improving the vetting and oversight of cooperating partners and vendors. Further information was sought on the number of cases handled by each investigator, given the increase in caseload; management’s approach to strengthening the control environment; and the potential creation of a framework for managing humanitarian access issues.

112. Members noted the increase in allegations of misconduct, but several considered that the increase reflected growing awareness and trust in reporting systems and the effectiveness of the detection system.

113. Responding to questions, the Inspector General confirmed that there had been cuts to the OIG’s budget in the first quarter of 2025, with impacts both on the workplan for internal audit and on the capacity to process allegations.

114. On management’s duty to report to OIG any significant failure, that reporting could take multiple forms, and OIG could also approach management if issues came to its attention. The Director of the Office of Inspections and Investigations clarified that at any given time, investigators handled between 15 and 20 cases of varying complexity. The Director of the Office of Internal Audit added that recurrent findings were identified in multiple regions and countries and over multiple years; sustained efforts were required to address them, including through the reframing of policies, the standardization of processes and investment in technology.

2025/EB.A/11 Management review of significant risk and control issues, 2024

115. Presenting the document, the Chief Risk Officer spoke of five priority risks and control issues – talent management and workforce planning; workplace culture and conduct; NGO management; identity management and information technology solutions; and monitoring – and four emerging challenges faced by WFP in 2024 – resource mobilization and donor relations; supply chain and delivery challenges; programmatic partnerships and host

government engagement; and transformation and change. He outlined the issues and related developments since 2023.

116. Board members welcomed the review, praising WFP’s progress in enhancing its internal control frameworks and risk management while recognizing the ongoing challenges. In terms of talent management and workforce planning, key concerns included staffing shortages, delays in recruitment and a perceived disconnect between WFP leadership’s vision and the operational reality in country offices. In view of the downsizing, concerns were also raised about staff morale and well-being, with one member asking WFP to address perceptions of inaction and lack of accountability among managers in relation to misconduct. Members thus emphasized the importance of clear communication with and support for the workforce, practices in the workplace that were aligned with WFP's stated policies, and continued improvements in the fields of recruitment, human resource guidance, talent management, succession planning and performance management.

117. Members stressed the importance of improving monitoring and evaluation capacities, and data use and integration. Several of them stressed the need to ensure that ongoing staff reductions did not compromise monitoring capabilities.

118. Some members considered the NGO cooperating partner road map for 2024–2026 and the future NGO management assurance framework to be crucial to reform efforts, but concerns remained regarding the adequacy of monitoring and the conduct of spot checks. Several members said that transparent and efficient guidance, effective tools, capacity-strengthening and clear responsibilities were essential to enabling country offices to manage cooperating partners in an equitable and principled manner and to ensuring balance in the distribution of oversight responsibilities, and thus the shouldering of risk, among local actors and WFP. One member asked how WFP sought to address concerns about the adequacy of resourcing for field-level management of cooperating partners.

119. One member stressed the critical role of high-quality, flexible and multi-year funding to improve WFP’s operational agility. Another noted the fragmentation in WFP systems and called for the continued improvement toward the standardization of systems within WFP and better interoperability between WFP and its partner systems.

120. While acknowledging the importance of the global assurance project, one member expressed concern over the increasing demands placed on country offices without the provision of adequate resources and asked how that would be remedied. Another member drew attention to the need for standard corporate systems and clearer guidance; better alignment of assurance action plans with risk management processes; criteria for assessing the progress of country offices in the implementation of global assurance standards; and reliable cost estimates and expense tracking.

121. In response, management outlined the steps already under way to address some of the issues raised, such as webinars to ensure clarity of communication with staff; a pilot project on succession planning; a robust employee support programme; a revised NGO guidance package and NGO onboarding training package; guidance on the conduct of spot checks; field-level agreements with a stronger liability, data protection and oversight clauses; the deployment of a budget and expenditure monitoring tool and the mainstreaming of the global assurance project as part of WFP’s corporate risk management cycle. As it was clear that funding would be insufficient, there was a need to prioritize and maximize resource efficiency through the integration of functions.

2025/EB.A/12 Annual report of the Office of the Ombudsperson and Mediation Services for 2024 and management note

122. The Director presented the annual report, which identified growing anxiety among WFP staff since 2023, stemming from ongoing organizational changes. The report highlighted areas of concern, including risk of staff burnout in the context of workforce reductions and prolonged uncertainty, the reassignment of managers with poor leadership records, and the impact of budget reductions on the operational capacity of the Office of the Ombudsperson and Mediation Services (OBD). Noting a significant rise in cases in the first part of 2025, the Director emphasized the importance of OBD services during organizational stress in terms of supporting staff, reducing risk and saving money through mediation and conflict resolution.

123. Management agreed with all the recommendations in the report and affirmed its appreciation for the work of OBD. Action had been taken to improve communication with staff, promote staff well-being including through the new duty of care framework and reinforce a respectful workplace culture. Work was ongoing to address issues around reassignment, onboarding, and performance management and leadership development tools. A change management dashboard and other mechanisms would be used to track progress and ensure accountability.

124. Board members welcomed the report and accompanying management note. They appreciated the transparency, breadth of analysis and recommendations, and highlighted the importance of informal conflict resolution, open channels of communication and accountability. They encouraged the adoption of digital tools, the strengthening of national capacities to ensure that staff behaviour was aligned with WFP values, and ongoing engagement between the Workplace and Management Department and staff, including through more frequent communication on key issues affecting WFP operations and personnel.

125. The Director of OBD welcomed the support expressed by Board members and management's acceptance of all its recommendations, reiterating OBD's commitment to resolving issues collaboratively and promoting a respectful workplace culture.

2025/EB.A/13 Annual report of the Ethics Office for 2024

126. The Director of the Ethics Office presented the annual report, noting that requests for advice from employees had increased by 13 percent since 2023. Demand for support services in relation to PSEA had risen by 25 percent over the same period. In 2024, when the Ethics Office had continued to be the PSEA focal point, the office had conducted training sessions for WFP staff, cooperating partners and other humanitarian personnel, provided support through field missions and supported the Executive Director in her role as Champion on PSEAH of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

127. Welcoming the report, several Board members affirmed the fundamental importance of integrity and ethical behaviour, noting that a strong ethical culture was key to ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources. Concerns were raised in relation to the impact of funding constraints on the Ethics Office, specifically whether the consequent reduction in travel, and thus face-to-face contact, would affect the provision of advice, training, awareness-raising and investigations.

128. In relation to the significant growth in requests for advice, one Board member asked whether factors other than growing confidence in the office could be driving that trend. Another Board member drew attention to potential reputational risks posed by former WFP employees, especially high-level staff, who took up roles in the private sector. More information was sought on the “speak up” culture and on how the Ethics Office would continue to support and complement PSEA work in light of the transition of PSEA responsibilities to a dedicated unit.

129. Responding to the comments, the Director said that, in the face of budget reductions, the office had focused on maintaining the quality of the advice provided, but it had had to reduce some budget lines, such as travel and in-person contact. Although the office still favoured face-to-face contact, it was also looking at virtual methods. To meet 2026 budget reductions, the office might have to reduce some originally planned fixed-term positions.

130. The Director saw the increase in requests for advice as evidence of the development of a culture of speaking up, as more staff were seeking advice before problems escalated. Risks associated with staff leaving WFP to join the private sector, or vice versa, were mitigated by contractual obligations on the respect of confidential information; stipulations that ensured that there was no contact with the former employer; and restrictions on speciality vendors, prohibiting them from hiring former WFP staff.

131. The Director of the PSEA Unit added that shrinking resources would also impact the ability of her team to conduct face-to-face outreach and support country offices. The unit remained committed to working closely with the Ethics Office, including on outreach, standards of conduct and joint missions where possible.

Policy issues (*continued*)

2025/EB.A/14 Amendment to the WFP evaluation policy 2022

132. Summarizing the proposed amendment to the evaluation policy, the Director of Evaluation noted that it reflected recent organizational changes enacted through the launch of the global headquarters model. The amendment formalized a change in the reporting line of the regional evaluation units, which now reported directly to the Director of Evaluation or designate, and specified that the regional evaluation units would be financed through the budget of the Office of Evaluation.

133. Board members endorsed the amendment, which some members described as enhancing the effectiveness, transparency and relevance of the evaluation policy. Emphasizing the value of the evaluation function, they noted the importance of focusing on learning and adaptation, technology, innovative uses of data, training, the development of specific indicators and a clear framework for measuring success, and the availability of user friendly evaluation summaries. They also urged WFP to strengthen its collaboration with other organizations and increase the co-financing of evaluations.

Oversight functions (*continued*)

2025/EB.A/15 Annual evaluation report for 2024 and management response

134. The Director of Evaluation presented the report, which summarized the findings from 13 centralized evaluation reports issued in 2024 and described performance against each of the evaluation policy outcomes. Management outlined the actions being taken in response to the report.

135. Board members welcomed the report, noting that its analysis of systemic challenges and opportunities complemented the findings in the annual performance report regarding WFP's programmatic achievements. They were particularly appreciative of the findings in relation to WFP's ability to respond rapidly to crises and provide common services for the humanitarian community; the integration of programmes for changing lives into WFP's work on saving lives; WFP's support for national food security, nutrition, resilience and social protection strategies, including through country capacity strengthening initiatives; and its focus on localization.

136. Progress had also been made in other areas, including risk management and the implementation of recommendations from evaluations. Some Board members urged management to build on these positive results by strengthening the targeting of its programmes in order to reduce inclusion and exclusion errors; improving the inclusion of vulnerable people in its programmes, including by embedding the consideration of issues related to protection, gender equality and disability inclusion into its day-to-day work; and translating country capacity strengthening efforts into coherent long-term investments that supported sustainable nationally owned systems.

137. There were calls for increasing the use of data – including disaggregated data, findings from evaluations and inputs from community feedback mechanisms – in informing the targeting of programmes, the drafting of the strategic plan for 2026–2029, and decision-making more generally. Welcoming WFP's shift from a transactional to a strategic approach to its partnerships, Board members recommended that the organization leverage the resulting stronger relationships and synergies with other United Nations entities, cooperating partners and government institutions to support shared priorities and the transfer of responsibilities to national authorities. Other recommendations included strengthening the analysis underlining the design of capacity strengthening activities and handover strategies; enhancing the cost-efficiency of procurement practices and the sustainability of exit strategies; and accelerating the operationalization of the resilience policy.

138. Board members asked the Office of Evaluation to clarify the responsibilities for implementing evaluation recommendations and invited management to elaborate on ways of improving the measurement of food security outcomes and using evaluation findings to inform the operationalization of the localization policy and strengthen exit strategies. Expressing their support for the continued independence of, and a strengthened strategic role for, the evaluation function, a number of Board members urged all donors to increase their efforts to ensure that WFP received the predictable and flexible financing that it required.

139. Thanking Board members for their in-depth review of the report, the Director of Evaluation explained that the document presented the main themes of evaluation recommendations; details of each recommendation were provided in the reports on individual evaluations. The next batch of CSP evaluations would cover issues related to localization and the priorities identified in the upcoming new strategic plan.

140. Management said that the Risk Management Division carried out monthly follow-ups on the implementation of recommended actions, increasing dashboard visibility and synergies with other oversight report findings; two food security indicators had been added to the corporate results framework – the food security resilience capacity score and the shock exposure index; and country offices had received guidance on country capacity strengthening work. Cross-cutting priorities such as protection would also be embedded further in policies and WFP's day-to-day work.

2025/EB.A/16 Summary report on the strategic evaluation on WFP's support to refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants and management response

141. The Director of Evaluation presented the main findings of the strategic evaluation, which had assessed WFP's provision of support to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants between 2017 and 2024. The evaluation offered insights in relation to WFP's vision and strategic positioning; the breadth and consistency of guidance and support for country offices; operational responses to the needs of refugees, IDPs and migrants, especially in the areas of nutrition and self-reliance; and gaps in efforts to address intersecting vulnerabilities. The report contained six recommendations in areas such as corporate positioning, programme design, partnerships, data systems and analysis, and resource mobilization.

142. Management confirmed WFP's agreement with all six recommendations and described some of the 40 actions that had been formulated to guide their implementation.

143. Welcoming the evaluation, Board members urged WFP to clarify its vision in relation to support for refugees, IDPs and migrants to ensure that humanitarian programmes addressed their differentiated needs. They encouraged WFP to strengthen relevant internal capacity and reinforce partnerships with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration, governments and financial institutions. The importance of securing flexible, predictable funding was highlighted, both to maintain emergency assistance and to support transitions toward sustainable solutions. WFP was encouraged to develop country-specific transition pathways that enabled governments to assume the management of assistance programmes and to adopt tailored approaches that strengthened resilience and reduced dependence on humanitarian aid.

144. Several Board members called for enhanced data systems and analytical capacity to better reflect the intersecting vulnerabilities of affected people. WFP was encouraged to improve its responsiveness to feedback, enhance protection frameworks, especially for displaced women and girls, and ensure that assistance remained inclusive and context-appropriate. Some members also commended WFP's adherence to humanitarian principles in supporting people regardless of their legal status. One Board member emphasized the future importance of using multilaterally agreed language in strategic documents.

145. Responding to the points raised, the Director of Evaluation noted that the evaluation indeed intended to apply the language of international frameworks. Management noted that, although WFP did not yet have a dedicated document setting out its vision for this area of work, its General Regulations and memorandum of understanding with UNHCR provided a solid foundation. The new strategic plan was noted as an opportunity to highlight WFP's vision and efforts for these populations. As per the recommendations in the evaluation, management agreed to advance a cascading approach to bring greater coherence between strategic commitments, programme frameworks and operational guidance. Differentiated and targeted approaches to assistance had already been developed and implemented in many refugee settings, and efforts were under way to improve the granularity and visibility of data related to displaced and mobile populations. Stronger partnerships would be critical in view of growing needs and limited funding.

146. WFP was fully committed to addressing the needs of all vulnerable populations, regardless of status. It was enhancing cooperation with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration, expanding its use of flexible funding to address urgent pipeline breaks for refugee programming, and had mobilized resources through the Changing Lives Transformation Fund in refugee settings. Long-term investment and self-reliance were

central to reducing dependence on humanitarian aid. WFP would update the Board on further progress in these areas.

2025/EB.A/17 Summary report of the synthesis on evaluations of WFP's engagement in middle-income countries (2019–2024) and management response

147. The Director of Evaluation recalled that 63 of the 89 countries where WFP currently worked were middle-income countries (MICs). In the period from 2019 to 2024 analysed in the evaluation synthesis, WFP had focused on providing technical assistance, policy advice, evidence generation and systems strengthening. The synthesis had analysed 73 evaluations carried out in 25 MICs in all WFP regions and found evidence of contributions to results in all areas of the strategic plan, but with challenges and missed opportunities in some cases. Management agreed with two of the recommendations produced by the synthesis and partially agreed with the other two. They outlined their plans for implementing the recommendations, noting that many of the recommended actions were not exclusive to MICs but should also inform WFP's approach in other settings.

148. Board members thanked the Office of Evaluation and management for their analysis of the challenges faced in MICs, which were home to more than three out of every five people living in extreme poverty globally. They welcomed the synthesis findings and endorsed management's response to them, mentioning in particular the plans for diversifying WFP's funding base, including through increased contributions from programme countries; the need to ensure that future WFP engagement and strategies explicitly considered the MIC subcategories of lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income countries, which better reflected their differing economic statuses, challenges and needs; the need to ensure that country office skillsets and knowledge included political economy analysis; and the need to reaffirm WFP's commitment to anticipatory action, resilience and efforts to address the root causes of food insecurity in MICs.

149. Expressing concern that while MICs accounted for 70 percent of the countries where WFP operated, only 33 percent of WFP's funding was allocated to them, Board members emphasized the value of WFP's work in MICs in providing experience and capacity that could be shared, including through South–South and triangular cooperation. They encouraged WFP to develop clear handover strategies; build resilient food systems; and strengthen national emergency response capacity. One Board member suggested that WFP establish a working group with List A in order to develop programmes and outcomes tailored to the challenges faced in African countries. Another member urged the organization to direct particular attention to the critical situation in Haiti.

150. Board members encouraged management to integrate the recommendations from the synthesis into WFP's next strategic plan; reaffirmed their commitment to supporting WFP's work in MICs; and urged donors to increase the predictability of their contributions in order to facilitate WFP's planning and scale-up of its work.

151. Thanking Board members for their support, management explained that WFP lacked the flexibility to allocate more resources to MICs because 90 percent of contributions were earmarked. The increasing contributions made by programme countries to WFP's interventions, including through international financial institutions, facilitated the handover of programmes; and South–South and triangular cooperation was highlighted as an important part of WFP's engagement with MICs.

2025/EB.A/18 Summary report on the corporate emergency evaluation of WFP's response in Ukraine and management response

152. The Director of Evaluation presented the report, highlighting insights derived from the evaluation in areas such as WFP's operational flexibility and scale-up capacity, monitoring and reporting systems, cash-based transfer modalities and the trade-offs between

humanitarian principles necessitated by the complex operating environment. The report contained five recommendations in relation to the application of lessons learned beyond the response in Ukraine; the use of global platforms to strengthen coordinated approaches; the enhancement of assessment, targeting and result measurement; the development of early recovery initiatives alongside emergency assistance; and WFP's eventual transition and exit from the country.

153. The Ukraine Country Director outlined the management response to the evaluation, noting that management agreed with four of the five recommendations and partially agreed with the fifth. Work had begun on implementing the recommendations, including in relation to applying the global guidelines on multipurpose cash, updating the targeting and prioritization strategy in Ukraine and strengthening outcome monitoring. WFP was exploring potential exit criteria, noting that a full cessation in hostilities and a return to normal economic activity were preconditions for its departure from the country. The evaluation recommended transitioning to a government-led sectoral coordination model. WFP partially agreed, noting its active role in the ongoing review of Ukraine's coordination architecture and commitment to its collective outcomes.

154. Board members commended WFP for its swift and large-scale humanitarian response following the escalation of conflict in Ukraine. Despite the challenging operational environment, WFP had quickly re-established logistics capacities and delivered vital food assistance. Some praised WFP's adherence to humanitarian principles.

155. Several members spoke in favour of increasing the use of cash-based assistance, which was recognized as effective, flexible and consistent with WFP's pledges under the Grand Bargain. One member voiced particular support for the recommendation on exploring early recovery initiatives. Others highlighted the need for more thorough integration of gender equality and social inclusion within WFP programming, expressing concern about limited attention to the differentiated needs of vulnerable groups, such as women, households led by women, older people, communities in frontline areas, people with disabilities and veterans. Calls were made for the collection of disaggregated data and the greater inclusion of beneficiaries in decision-taking processes.

156. Several members noted WFP's effective coordination and partnerships, including with local actors, and encouraged further strengthening of that approach. One member advocated engagement with non-traditional actors and local NGOs and efforts to bring them into coordination mechanisms. A speaker expressed interest in including a more detailed assessment of WFP's localization efforts in Ukraine within the summary evaluation report.

157. Members underscored the importance of developing a clear exit strategy that identified triggers for the phase-out of WFP operations, incorporated efforts to build national capacity, including within civil society, and ensured a sustainable handover.

158. Thanking Board members for their comments, the Director of Evaluation drew attention to the full evaluation report, which provided much more detailed information, including on cash transfers and localization.

159. The Country Director emphasized WFP's commitment to the use of multi-purpose cash transfers, explaining that changes in the transfer value in Ukraine had led the organization to take a sector-based approach. Around 50 percent of WFP assistance in Ukraine was provided in cash. The number of assisted people had decreased dramatically, with the organization currently reaching 1 million people living on the frontlines, where constant attacks by drones and artillery fire were occurring and, in some areas, markets were not properly functioning. Forty-one WFP food distribution sites and warehouses had been attacked in the preceding 12 months. WFP had been involved in global and country-level coordination efforts, where the number of clusters had been reduced, and a sub-national coordinating mechanism had been established. WFP had an 18-month plan for phasing out

its operations once peace returned to Ukraine and was encouraging the rest of the United Nations system active in the humanitarian space in Ukraine to adopt the same approach.

Organizational and administrative matters (*continued*)

2025/EB.A/19 Appointment of one Executive Board member to the selection panel for the appointment of Independent Oversight Advisory Committee members

160. The Board approved the appointment of Her Excellency Ms Krisztina Bende, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations organizations in Rome, to represent List D on the selection panel for the appointment of IOAC members. Ms Bende replaced Mr Peter Natiello, Alternate Permanent Representative of the United States of America, who had left Rome.

2025/EB.A/20 Exception to General Rule VI.1 with regard to the submission of the strategic plan to the annual session of the Board

161. Presenting this item, the President of the Executive Board recalled that, at its 2024 second regular session, the Board had approved the Secretariat's proposal for postponing the presentation of the strategic plan from the 2025 annual session to the 2025 second regular session in order to allow sufficient time for extensive stakeholder consultations. However, as General Rule VI.1 specified that the strategic plan be submitted to the annual session, the Board had to approve an exception to this general rule, in accordance with Board regulations.

162. The exception was approved without further discussion.

2025/EB.A/21 Appointment of the Inspector General and Director of the Oversight Office

163. Management noted that Executive Director had decided to initiate a competitive process for selecting an Inspector General and proposed advertising the position immediately, while extending the term of the current Inspector General until 14 September 2025. In line with established procedure, representatives of the Executive Board Bureau and the IOAC would be invited to participate in the selection process, which would be concluded as quickly as possible to ensure continuity.

164. While agreeing to the Executive Director's proposal, some Board members expressed concern regarding the suggested approach, noting that it differed from that normally followed by United Nations entities, whereby a position was advertised only after it had been decided that the incumbent's term would not be renewed. Several Board members questioned the rationale for asking the current Inspector General to reapply for the position rather than simply renewing her term; one member suggested that any issues with her performance be shared with the Board through the Bureau.

165. Board members emphasized the importance of ensuring a swift and transparent selection process. Concerns were raised with regard to the delay in launching the process, and Board members requested that any necessary extension of the interim arrangements beyond 14 September 2025 be submitted to the Board for approval via correspondence. One Board member suggested that in future, consideration be given to appointing the Inspector General for a single non-renewable term of, for example, six years.

166. Management reiterated WFP's commitment to ensuring the independence of the Inspector General and expressed regret regarding the delay in putting forward the Executive Director's proposal, which was due to unavoidable circumstances.

Summary of the work of the Executive Board

2025/EB.A/22 Summary of the work of the 2025 first regular session of the Executive Board

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

Verification of adopted decisions and recommendations

168. 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

169. The Executive Director thanked the President and the Secretary to the Board and his team for their hard work and Board members and observers for their insights and support. Discussions during the session had been detailed and constructive, covering a range of strategic policies and issues, with oversight and accountability always at the forefront. WFP was strongly committed to deepening its partnerships with Member States in an open, transparent and accountable manner, working together on the shared mission to end hunger.

170. Underscoring the complexity of operating environments all over the world, she affirmed that WFP was meeting the challenge with courage and conviction. The new strategic plan, to be presented to the Board at the 2025 second regular session, brought together all the reforms under way, creating a coherent blueprint for the future that would enable WFP to adapt to a changing world.

171. WFP's strength was its dedicated staff on the front lines who worked tirelessly for a world free from hunger. She commended the commitment of the team members to whom she had awarded long-service pins. WFP would do all that it could to provide its teams with support, resources and protection, but she also sought the support of Member States, including in preventing restrictions on humanitarian access and preserving space for principled humanitarian action.

172. In closing, she expressed her appreciation for the unwavering support of the departing members of the Board and of Board Secretary Philip Ward, wishing him all the best for his new role as Country Director for Sri Lanka.

Acronyms

CSP	country strategic plan
EBS	Executive Board Secretariat
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCMF	Global Commodity Management Facility
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IOAC	Independent Oversight Advisory Committee
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IRA	Immediate Response Account
ISC	indirect support cost
IT	information technology
OBD	Office of the Ombudsperson and Mediation Services
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OEV	Office of Evaluation
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OIGI	Office of Investigation
PSA	programme support and administrative (budget)
PSEA	protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
PSEAH	protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment
SD3C	Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework