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Joint Discussion Note

Collaboration between the Rome-based agencies in Cameroon



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Table of Contents

PART A	1
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Cameroon Context	2
3 Overview of WFP, IFAD and FAO programmes in Cameroon	2
PART B.....	5
4 Analysis to identify opportunities for future collaboration.....	5
4.1 Strengths of each agency	5
4.2 Existing collaborations among the three RBAs	7
4.3 Future Strategic Directions recommended by the three evaluations	8
4.4 Opportunities to enhance synergies and future collaborations	9
4.5 Challenges for collaboration.....	12
5 Conclusions.....	13

PART A

1 Introduction

1. Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) - FAO, IFAD and WFP - is considered an important opportunity to enhance effectiveness of both humanitarian and development assistance by the three organisations at global, regional and country level. In late 2015, the RBAs commissioned a joint study to “outline the agencies’ collaboration, including on how they will support countries in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda”¹. As indicated in the joint study report, RBAs collaboration needs to be based on the mandates and related comparative advantages and distinctive strengths of each agency. Moreover, collaboration should lead to a clear and mutually recognized added value in terms of results relevant to the goals and objectives of the countries that the three agencies serve.
2. In 2017, the FAO Office of Evaluation, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD and the WFP Office of Evaluation conducted separate evaluations of their respective country strategies and programmes in Cameroon. They took advantage of the coinciding evaluation timeframes to analyse RBAs collaboration and, based on the existing country needs and the three organizations' strengths, help identify areas for future collaboration.
3. During the evaluations, the three agencies adopted a coordinated approach sharing information and discussing findings. The evaluation offices presented their evaluations during a joint national workshop held in Yaoundé in February 2018. The workshop was an important occasion to share the main conclusions and recommendations of each evaluation with the Government and other key partners in the country and discuss future opportunities for joint programming.
4. To make best use of the results of these reflections, the evaluation offices of the three agencies prepared this paper bringing together the findings of the three individual evaluations on RBAs collaboration and the results of the discussions held during the workshop, with the purpose of documenting the process and suggesting some areas for future collaboration among the RBAs in Cameroon.
5. The main audience of this paper includes: i) the three country offices, whose future collaboration and joint programming could be informed by the suggestions made in the paper; ii) the Government of Cameroon who could use it to orient its coordination and collaboration with the RBAs; iii) the Governing bodies of the three agencies who are asking for more joint work among the RBAs at country level and for whom this could be an informative case study; and iv) the three evaluation offices who could use this experience for conducting other coordinated evaluative work in the future.
6. The Government’s views on potential areas for future collaboration among RBAs constituted an important basis for the analysis. Indeed, as part of each individual evaluation, the three evaluation teams met with government officials at central and decentralised level and specific questions were asked on their views on this subject during these meetings. In

¹ Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda, November 2016, Rome: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr918rev1e.pdf>

addition, the joint workshop, which was led by the Ministry of Agriculture, saw the participation of several national institutions that contributed actively to the discussions.

2 Cameroon Context

7. Cameroon is a lower-middle income country. The agricultural sector employs 60 percent of the labour force and contributes 20 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).² The population reached 23 million in 2017, with almost half under the age of 18 years. Cameroon ranked 153 out of 188 in 2015 on the Human Development Index³, with 38 percent of the population living below the poverty line. Food insecurity affects 3.9 million of people⁴ and acute and chronic child malnutrition rates remain high with large disparities among regions⁵.
8. The country is located in a highly volatile region. Intensification of the Central African Republic crisis at the end of 2013 has resulted in a large influx of new refugees to the eastern regions. Since the end of 2014, attacks from the armed group Boko Haram have provoked a humanitarian crisis in the Far North region with critical humanitarian needs of internally displaced people, refugees and host communities. The most recent Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) shows that food insecurity rates are particularly high in the regions affected by these crises as well as in the Western part of the country (the West and North-West regions).

3 Overview of WFP, IFAD and FAO programmes in Cameroon

9. The table below summarizes the main features of the three agencies' country programmes. As shown, there are some similarities but also many key differences among the agencies.

Table 1. Overview of WFP, IFAD, and FAO's country portfolios in Cameroon

	WFP 2012 - mid-2017	IFAD 2007 Mid-2017	FAO 2013-2017
Priority regions and geographical areas of interventions	Rural and Urban Areas	Rural Areas	Mainly Rural Areas. Some interventions in Peri-urban Areas.
	Far North, North, East, and Adamoua regions Food Security Monitoring / Assessments in the entire country	Far North, North, Northwest, West and Central. Recently: Littoral and South	Resilience Program in the Far North and East Development projects: different geographical areas
Key Themes/Activities	School meals, Nutrition, Early recovery/Resilience, General Food Distribution, Humanitarian logistical	Local development, agricultural development, producer organizations, rural finance, value chains,	Normative work, early recovery / resilience, animal production and health, sustainable natural resource management, plant protection, value

² Ministère de la Planification et de l'Aménagement du Territoire (MINEPAT) (2016) "Stratégie de Développement du Secteur Rural."

³ UNDP: Human Development Indicators – Cameroon <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CMR>

⁴ WFP "Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Study – Cameroon" 2017
http://vam.wfp.org/CountryPage_assessments.aspx?iso3=CMR

⁵ The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate among children under five was estimated at 7.5% with 13.0% in the North region and 1.7% in the West region. According to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Platform, the overall chronic malnutrition rate among children under five is 31.7%.

	WFP 2012 - mid-2017	IFAD 2007 Mid-2017	FAO 2013-2017
	support, Capacity Development	rural youth entrepreneurship	chains, environmental protection, aquaculture, youth and women employment
Target groups	Food Insecure Households, Malnourished women and children	Poor and vulnerable rural populations, especially youth and women	Different target groups according to the type of project
Main National partners	MINADER (including the FAO/WFP Committee and PNSA), MINAS, MINEDUB, MINEPAT, MINSANTE	MINADER, MINEPIA, MINEPAT	MINADER (including the FAO / WFP Committee and PNSA), MINEPIA, MINEPDED, MINFOF, MINSANTE
Key partners of the UN System	UNICEF, UNHCR, FAO	UNDP, UNCDF, ILO, UN Women, United Nations Fisheries & Aquaculture training programme (UN-FTP)	UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP
Participation in National Coordination	UNDAF, Humanitarian Coordination, SUN Platform, National Policy Development (School Meals, Nutrition)	Signatory of the 2013-2017 UNDAF, Participation in the development but not a signatory of the UNDAF 2018-2020, CPM-Agriculture	UNDAF, SUN Platform, Humanitarian Coordination, CPM-Agriculture
Budget and Funding	Budget: US\$403 million Mobilized and spent: USD 231 million	Project loans: USD 84.2 million Country grants: USD 0.65 million	Total delivery: US\$10.3 million
Assistance modalities	Grants through cash, in-kind, and technical assistance	Loans and Grants	Grants through in-kind and technical assistance
Key donors	United States (32%), Multilateral (12%), Germany (11%), UN CERF (9%), European Union (9%) and others (27%)	IFAD member states (52.7%), Government and beneficiaries (47.1%), others (0.2%)	FAO (23%), GEF (42%), Sweden (11%), UNOCHA (11%), UNDP (7%), Belgium (2%), others (4%)

10. **FAO's programme** - The FAO evaluation assessed all FAO interventions implemented under the Country Programming Framework 2013-2017. The programme comprised several small grant projects implemented in collaboration with the Government including: support to market vegetable gardening, capacity development of farmers on identification and treatment of plant diseases, production of Tilapia fish in cages, fruit production, school gardens and support to the organisation of producers in the animal feed industry. FAO provided capacity development assistance to the national animal health laboratory and, in 2016, supported the Government in the response to the avian influenza emergency. A large share of the overall budget consisted of initiatives on sustainable natural resource management including community forests, conservation and management of mangroves ecosystems, pesticides management and support to the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) process.

11. In crisis-affected regions, FAO implemented projects to rehabilitate beneficiaries' livelihoods through short-term activities (mainly seed and animal distributions) and medium to long-term interventions (including for instance rehabilitation of infrastructures along the transhumance corridors). As part of its normative work, FAO supported the production of agricultural statistics and contributed to the formulation of the National Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA). Over the period, a major change for FAO's presence in the country has been the agreement signed by the Government of Cameroon for the

establishment of a Liaison and Partnership Office. It is a new type of Country Office recently developed by the Organisation to respond to the needs of a number of Member Nations requiring a new or strengthened form of FAO presence in their country on a cost-sharing basis⁶.

12. **IFAD's programme** - The IFAD Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) 2007-2012, covered by the evaluation, aimed to strengthen the organizational capacity and bargaining power of the rural poor; and to increase opportunities for sustainable agricultural and non-agricultural income-generating activities for the rural poor. Four projects were implemented under this COSOP focussing on participatory local development, agricultural productivity, market access, rural financial services and farmer organisation.
13. A new Portfolio Strategy for the country was formulated for the period 2015-2019. It aims at strengthening the performance of production systems and their resilience to climate change, and at improving access of smallholders to efficient financial and non-financial services. Two projects are implemented under this strategy focusing on rural youth entrepreneurship, one of which specialising in aquaculture. A new project for the promotion of sustainable youth entrepreneurship in natural resources management is in the pipeline. Since 2011, the country programme is managed by a country programme manager based in Yaoundé and supported by a team that has gradually been strengthened. In 2018, IFAD created a sub-regional hub in Yaoundé with enhanced project supervision and implementation support capacity.
14. **WFP's programme** - The WFP country portfolio evaluation covered the period 2012 to mid-2017. The WFP's Portfolio in Cameroon was multi-faceted.⁷ Key activities included school meals, food assistance for assets and training, general food assistance, blanket and targeted supplementary feeding, food by prescription, capacity development, food security information systems, humanitarian and development assistance coordination and policy support, and humanitarian logistics and air service. The operations were concentrated in the four regions with the highest level of poverty, food insecurity, and humanitarian needs: Far North, North, Adamaoua, and East. In total the portfolio has provided direct support to more than 2.5 million children, women, and men during the period 2012 – 2017.
15. The period covered by the evaluation was characterised by a move from a relatively stable situation - with possibilities for longer-term planning and focus on resilience strengthening activities such as school feeding and community cereal banks - towards an unstable situation with strong humanitarian needs. To respond to the changing situation, the WFP portfolio was realigned to the needs of more refugees, internally displaced persons and vulnerable host populations. WFP adapted its approaches reflecting the shift from treating

⁶ Cameroon adopted this new modality of cooperation in 2015. As part of this change, the Government committed to establish a trust fund to finance activities implemented under the new Country Programme Framework (CPF) and the provision of technical staff for the Liaison and Partnership Office. The benefits of this agreement for the Government include: the availability of on-site technical expertise; the possibility for young national civil servants to gain experience working with international experts based in Cameroon; and the opportunity to further develop South-South cooperation initiatives.

⁷ The programme comprised 11 relief, recovery, development and special operations implemented through a suite of Immediate Response-Emergency Operations (IR-EMOP); single country and regional Emergency Operations (EMOPs); Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRROs); development-oriented operations (Country Programmes - CPs); and Special Operations to facilitate food assistance responses (SOs).

malnutrition to preventing it in conformity with the revised National Nutrition Policy (2015-2025) and the introduction of cash-based transfers.

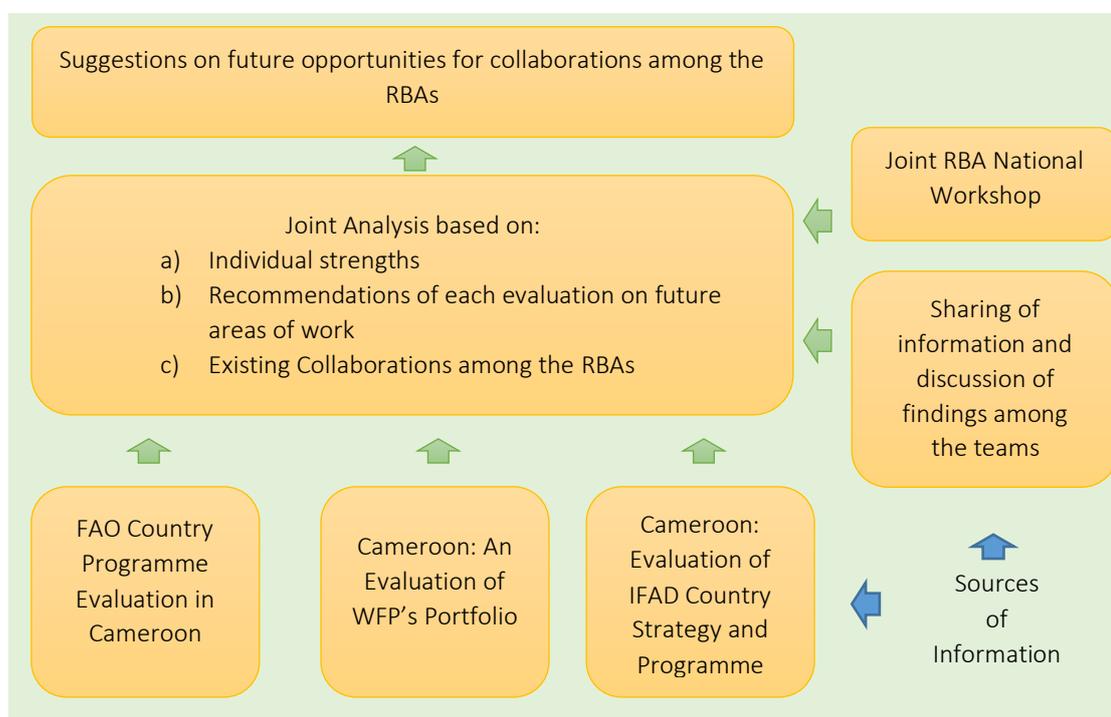
16. Over the period, the WFP played an important role in supporting the production and dissemination of food security information and in the coordination of the humanitarian response. WFP co-chaired the working groups on nutrition, food security, logistics, and cash-based transfers.
17. At the beginning of the period covered by the evaluation, there was only one sub-office located in Garoua. With the development of emergency needs in the northern and eastern regions from 2013 onwards, a relatively flexible office structure with up to seven sub-offices and three field offices has been put in place.

PART B

4 Analysis to identify opportunities for future collaboration

18. The three evaluation teams identified areas for future collaboration taking into account: i) the analysis of each agency’s strengths; ii) existing collaborations; ii) the recommendations of each evaluation on the future strategic thrusts of the agencies; and iv) discussions with government representatives and development partners during the joint workshop. Table 2 below presents the framework for joint analysis.

Table 2 – Framework for joint analysis



4.1 Strengths of each agency

19. While no strict comparative advantage analysis was undertaken in the context of the three evaluations, the three evaluation reports present the main strengths of each agency. These are summarized below.

20. **FAO's strengths in Cameroon** - FAO's comparative advantage in Cameroon consists of its technical knowledge and its close collaboration with Government at national and decentralised level, in particular, with the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development and the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries, and Animal Industries. In Cameroon, FAO's expertise allowed the Organisation to support the Government in different areas including animal health and production, sustainable management of natural resources, plant protection, horticulture, aquaculture, food safety and value chain development.
21. FAO Cameroon can count on the Sub-regional Office in Libreville that offers expertise in several technical areas. It is the first port of call for countries in the region when it comes to technical support. The Sub-regional Office has been very present in the implementation of the FAO Country Programme. The FAO country team is relatively small, but the signature of the partnership agreement will allow for a larger technical presence in the country.
22. In Cameroon, FAO was able to promote over the years relevant approaches for rural development. In particular, the Farmer Field School approach for extension, which demonstrated its effectiveness for knowledge transfer and the uptake of good agricultural practices, and more recently, the Inclusive Business Model (IBM) approach for linking small farmers to the market.
23. FAO has also a recognised advantage in contexts transitioning between humanitarian and development needs. Indeed, it is a development agency also active in the humanitarian response in Cameroon.
24. **IFAD's strengths in Cameroon** - IFAD provides relatively sizable loans and grants to Government for financing rural and agricultural development projects implemented by the Government. This puts the Government in the driver seat and helps build capacity and ownership, increasing the likelihood of sustainability and upscaling, but there is a trade-off in terms of project efficiency and effectiveness.
25. In Cameroon, IFAD has a capable country team, able to coordinate project design and provide close supervision and implementation support to the projects, and can rely on solid technical assistance from a large network of trusted consultants in the fields of farmer organisations, value chains, rural enterprises and finance, gender and natural resources management, among others.
26. IFAD financing is appreciated for helping the Government to roll out and fine tune innovative rural development approaches at a relatively large scale, such as strengthening farmer cooperatives and promoting rural youth entrepreneurship. According to IFAD's mandate and strategic objectives for Cameroon, IFAD-financed interventions should target the poorest and most vulnerable smallholder farmers, though this has become increasingly challenging with the recent project approaches focussing on cooperatives and youth entrepreneurship.
27. **WFP's strengths in Cameroon** – WFP has a long experience in Cameroon with well-established partnerships and knowledge of the local conditions from long-term cooperation. The agency has been present in the country since the 1970s. According to partners, its strategic comparative advantage in Cameroon is linked to WFP's mandate and long experience in general food distribution, logistics, school meals, cereal banks and nutrition activities. WFP's presence at central and regional levels in the country, through the country

programmes and regular food security monitoring, have allowed the organization to respond quickly to emergencies resulting from natural calamities and conflicts. The agency's flexible approach, a suite of response instruments, and readiness for humanitarian responses when needs emerge, is seen by partners as a clear advantage.

28. WFP was able to play a leadership role in emergency food security thanks to its expertise in developing food security information systems and products. Food security information produced is extensively used by partners because of its good quality and timeliness. WFP's strong contribution in coordinating humanitarian response plans at national and regional levels also allowed greater visibility of the food crisis and the positive role of WFP in helping secure relatively high funding level in the joint appeals.
29. WFP is recognised as an important player in coordination platforms for development specifically in the design of the previous and current UNDAF (2018-2022). As an active participant of the SUN movement, the agency contributed to the development of a joint WFP-UNICEF-Government work plan defining strategies geared towards reducing under-nutrition, especially stunting, in the northern and eastern regions and has worked with UNAIDS and other United Nations agencies to align with and support the Government's efforts to scaling up strategies of prevention and control of HIV.

4.2 Existing collaborations among the three RBAs

30. The three evaluations identified and described existing collaborations among the agencies. The evaluations found that while the agencies frequently exchange information and consult each other, and participate in joint coordination frameworks, there has been limited cooperation at the operational level.
31. The most important *coordination frameworks* in Cameroon where the agencies are present together, are:
 - The **Multi-partner committee on Agriculture**, which offers a forum for sharing information among the resource partners. The three agencies participate in the committee which is led by FAO.
 - The **Thematic Group on Food Security (GTSA)** led by Government through the National Programme of Food Security (PNISA) and co-facilitated by FAO and WFP. This group was established quite recently in response to the spill-over effects from the Lake Chad and Central African Republic crisis that affected particularly the East, North, and Far North regions. IFAD does not participate in this committee.
 - The **Scaling-Up Nutrition platform** where FAO and WFP are key participants. Cameroon joined the SUN movement in 2013 showing the commitment by the Government to fight the wide-spread child malnutrition.
 - The **United Nations Country Team (UNCT)** and the **United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF)**. All the three agencies participate in the UNCT, and

FAO and WFP contribute to the current UNDAF. In particular, they are contributing together to pillar IV “*Resilience, early recovery and food security*”.⁸

- The **Humanitarian Country Team** and related coordinated humanitarian responses to which both FAO and WFP participate.
32. As mentioned, *collaborations at operational level* have been more limited. Over the period, FAO’s Investment Centre was contracted several times by IFAD to provide technical expertise for project design and supervision missions. It also assisted IFAD with the preparation of the 2015-2019 Portfolio Strategy. However, FAO has not been involved in their implementation. A complementary work between FAO and IFAD has been the study carried out by FAO on aquaculture that was then used by an IFAD programme on entrepreneurship in aquaculture. Finally, while FAO and WFP have developed some proposals for joint resource mobilisation, resources did not materialise.
33. In addition, it should be noted that RBAs collaboration in Cameroon has manifested itself in some practical arrangements over the years, such as WFP providing office space for FAO in Maroua in Far North region and the WFP Country Director serving as interim for the FAO Representative for several months.
34. Within the framework of WFP and FAO cooperation with the Government, a special oversight committee, the **FAO/WFP Management Committee**, was created in 1986. This committee had the mandate for monitoring and coordinating assistance from the two agencies. However, today, the mandate and the capacity of the Committee seem not adapted to the present-day assistance provided by the two agencies. This has been recognized by the Government of Cameroon and the Committee is currently undergoing an internal reorganization exercise to adapt to present needs.

4.3 Future Strategic Directions recommended by the three evaluations

35. The three evaluations included recommendations suggesting future areas of work for each agency. The analysis took into consideration these recommendations to identify opportunities for joint work among the RBAs. The recommendations are summarised below.
36. **FAO** - The Country programme evaluation suggested to continue the work started under the previous Country Programming Framework and maintain the main priority areas (briefly: crop production and plant protection, animal production and health, sustainable management of natural resources and policy support). In addition, the evaluation recommended to increase efforts in nutrition and youth employment and to strengthen the resilience programme in the Far North Region and the Eastern part of the country.
37. **IFAD** - The evaluation recommended to continue the support to producer organizations, the development of rural youth entrepreneurship, and the promotion of access to appropriate financial services for the rural poor. However, it stressed the importance of ensuring better inclusion of the very poor and vulnerable rural populations to address inequalities, by improving the geographical and social targeting of interventions. The evaluation urged the Government to rationalize project operating costs and to provide

⁸ IFAD does not participate in the current UNDAF. Indeed, given that the agency is providing mainly loans to the Government, it cannot commit on behalf of Government on common objectives and allocation of funding with the other UN agencies.

stronger leadership in coordinating development partners working in the rural and agricultural sector.

38. **WFP** – The evaluation recommended to refocus nutrition programming on a prevention approach; to expand the use of cash-based transfer modalities; to continue to target humanitarian needs in the northern and eastern regions while gradually moving towards the re-establishment of early recovery activities; and to develop a strategy for supporting the development of national and local capacities in food security monitoring, early warning and response.
39. Regarding future RBAs collaboration, the WFP evaluation particularly highlighted RBAs collaboration as a means to respond to the zero-hunger challenge. The evaluation recommended that the Country Office take initiatives to institutionalize mutual partnerships for joint programming where synergies and complementary benefits can be identified, in particular: a) Food Security Information System through further development of the sentinel system already being piloted in Far North and greater involvement of national and local governments in food security monitoring; b) Capacity strengthening of relevant government counterparts; c) Resilience strategies to harmonize complementary activities and resources; and d) Strategies for combining school feeding with Purchase for Progress (P4P).
40. All three evaluations have identified challenges in fully responding to United Nations principles for mainstreaming gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) in activities implemented by the agencies. The evaluations recommended stronger efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in the three programmes. Particularly, context specific gender analyses as a basis for the design of the operations have been lacking. So, while the country programmes in principle support women and girls' activities, they do not effectively address gender specific needs in different contexts.

4.4 Opportunities to enhance synergies and future collaborations

41. This section proposes some areas for future collaboration that have been identified by the three evaluation teams based on each agency's strengths, the recommendations made by the three reports, the discussions held during the workshop and considering the already existing collaborations.
42. **Crisis affected areas** - There are potential complementarities among the agencies in the Far North where the three are all present. FAO and WFP are involved in the humanitarian response and resilience initiatives in the areas affected by the crisis and IFAD expects soon to return to the Far North with a new development programme. Both FAO and WFP evaluations recommended to continue working in these regions addressing humanitarian needs while working at the same time on recovery and longer-term development. Considering the weak complementarity of the Rome-based agencies and the corporate call for strengthening their collaboration, the WFP evaluation recommended to design a resilience strategy to make best use of complementarities and resources. FAO and WFP could for instance implement together Food for Assets (FFA) and Food for Training (FFT) interventions. IFAD's new intervention will support young rural entrepreneurs in setting up and developing small businesses in agriculture, livestock and natural resource management, and build resilience to climate change. While the project design has already been finalised, the Government and IFAD may want to seek complementarities with FAO and WFP interventions in the same area, where relevant.

43. **Food security information** - The crises drove partners' attention on food insecurity and increased the demand for data and information to better plan and monitor the response. WFP has been leading in supporting Government in the collection of data on food insecurity and FAO has often participated in the surveys conducted.⁹ The evaluations noted a demand by the national counterpart for further support in this area, in particular for the introduction of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) to better orient the response of partners and for the extension of sentinel sites that have already been piloted in the Far North. Strengthening the FS information system is an area of work where the two agencies, FAO and WFP, can bring their respective comparative advantages. It should be noted that the most food insecure regions are not only the ones affected by the crisis. Indeed, if the Far North is the most affected by food insecurity, with 30.7% of the population moderately food insecure, the second and third most-affected regions are the North West (18%) and the West (16%).¹⁰ This calls for the creation of a national food security information system that goes beyond the humanitarian crisis affected regions.
44. **Youth employment** - This is among Cameroon's national priorities. Both FAO and IFAD's evaluations recommended focusing on this area. The Government, IFAD and FAO should reflect on how to better create synergies between their interventions in the creation of opportunities for young entrepreneurs in the rural sector. The two agencies for example are working on aquaculture. FAO is piloting an initiative on the production of Tilapia in cages, something that could be scaled up in IFAD's project on aquaculture entrepreneurship. Collaborations in other technical areas where young entrepreneurs need technology support could also be explored such as natural resource management, climate change resilient agricultural practices, private extension services linked to agricultural inputs supply, private veterinary services linked to animal medication supply, crop seed multiplication etc.
45. **Agricultural value chains** - FAO can offer its technical expertise to IFAD-financed projects in this area. For instance, FAO has produced studies on post-harvest food losses on several value chains, and this work could be extended to food crops, which are of interest to farmer cooperatives supported by IFAD-financed projects. FAO has also promoted the Inclusive Business Model (IBM) in Cameroon, an approach for linking small producers to the market, yet, due to limited funds, this initiative was on a very small scale. FAO Cameroon has also a long experience in utilising the Farmer Field School approach that has demonstrated its effectiveness in knowledge transfer and uptake of innovative agricultural practices by farmers. The Government and IFAD-funded operations could benefit from these extension methods and market access tools for farmer cooperatives and young agriculture or animal husbandry entrepreneurs.
46. **Nutrition** - Another priority area for future work identified by FAO and WFP evaluations is nutrition and the importance of prevention. Especially in the resilience programme there is scope for the two organisations to increase joint work. For instance, WFP, which has a strong experience in nutrition education, could support FAO to integrate this in its resilience interventions. The three agencies could also work together with Government on the promotion of nutrition-sensitive agriculture. The reviewed national policy on nutrition

⁹ The agencies participate to the evaluation of the annual crop production, the two agencies collaborated in the CFSVA (2011 and 2017) and FAO is also consulted in the EFSA that are led by WFP.

¹⁰ CFSVA 2017

should constitute the basis for discussions among the three agencies for future collaborations.

47. **School feeding** - During the early years of the evaluation period, WFP supported 276 schools and school meals reached 25 percent of planned beneficiaries. Building on such experience there have been some attempts by FAO and WFP to work together on school gardens and school meals in the Great North. However, this intended collaboration did not materialize because of emerging needs linked to the crises in the Far North and Eastern part of the country, which led in 2015 to temporary downsizing the role of WFP support in school meals. As a result, FAO implemented the school garden project independently. The findings from the FAO evaluation clearly show that this initiative has been very much appreciated by communities with a strong ownership by schools. Indeed, the project did not only increase the consumption of vegetables in the school canteens, but it also increased availability of vegetables on the local markets. The two agencies could consider similar collaborations in the future.
48. **Purchase for Progress (P4P)/Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA)** – These intervention modalities could bring together the three agencies. Indeed, WFP may provide a market for products produced by FAO- and IFAD-supported projects, through institutional purchases. Past experiences in other countries of P4P/PAA programmes can provide several lessons learned. For instance, FAO and WFP conducted a joint evaluation of a “Purchase from Africans for Africa – PAA” programme in Senegal. The results of this evaluation can be of great value should the three agencies initiate this experience in Cameroon.
49. **Gender** - As indicated before, a common point made by the evaluations that was largely discussed during the workshop is weak integration of gender in the three programmes. All the evaluations recommended to better integrate gender, going from conducting more thorough gender analysis during the formulation of projects to better monitoring and evaluation of the impact of activities on women and men. The three agencies could work together on a joint RBA Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and the Rural Sector as part of their future collaboration to help improving focus and performance in this area. In addition, joint advocacy towards the Government on this topic by the three agencies could be very helpful, perhaps based on the joint gender assessment.
50. **Government coordination of the rural sector** - Both FAO and IFAD evaluations highlighted the need to strengthen coordination, harmonization and policy engagement in the agricultural and rural development sector. In addition to the RBAs, development partners supporting agricultural and rural development in Cameroon are numerous, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, and the OPEC International Development Fund, as well as several bilateral development partners such as France, Germany and Japan. In general, Government leadership in coordinating the sector is weak and opportunities for policy engagement with the Government on rural development related topics are limited. Both evaluations emphasized the need to support the Government in taking up its coordinating role, while increasing opportunities for outreach to Government and also for joint advocacy actions on priority issues for the rural sector. Jointly blowing new life in the Multi-partner committee on Agriculture, under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, would be one way to improve coordination and policy engagement in the sector.

51. **Zero Hunger Strategic Review** - In 2017, the WFP promoted in Cameroon the Zero Hunger Strategic Review process. The ZHSR is a requirement for the development of CSP for the WFP to ensure that WFP activities will fit within national plans. At the same time, the ZHSR is aiming at designing a process and developing a report that should be useful to all actors working in food security and nutrition and to allow other actors to anchor their programmes in a national road map for zero hunger. Indeed, the Cameroon main counterpart (PNSA) very much appreciated the ZHSR that allowed to establish a baseline and define jointly agreed priority actions to accelerate progress towards zero hunger.
52. In Cameroon, the ZHSR process was supported principally by WFP and saw the participation of FAO, however, the document does not refer to RBAs strategic and operational collaboration and IFAD is not mentioned. Given the centrality of the SDG2 in RBAs collaboration, it is highly desirable that in the future the three agencies will use similar occasions for reflecting on opportunities for strategic and operational collaborations.
53. **Joint corporate services** - The 2015 joint RBA study¹¹ mentions that the three agencies will continue to seek opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness through joint corporate services at Headquarters and in the field. Such practices not only increase cost-efficiency but also enhance communication and potential collaboration among the agencies. In Cameroon the WFP has a clear comparative advantage in terms of field presence with 5 field offices. IFAD's country office has recently been expanded to become a sub-regional hub. The RBAs could consider sharing office space in Yaoundé. The evaluation of FAO appreciated that FAO sub-office in Maroua was hosted by WFP. FAO presence in the Far North region is quite limited and further synergies with WFP could help FAO to be more operational on the ground. Cameroon has recently signed an agreement with FAO for the establishment of a new partnership and liaison office that will allow for a stronger presence of technical expertise at country level. It would be worth reflecting on how this increased technical capacity could also benefit the other two agencies.

4.5 *Challenges for collaboration*

54. The 2015 joint RBA study also identifies current systemic and structural challenges to collaboration such as *“distinct governance structures, different government counterparts, business models, funding cycles, donor-specific priorities, instruments of development finance, organizational cultures, levels of decentralization, and country presence that have impacts on country-specific operational processes.”* It also adds that *“no matter how well funded they are, each of the RBAs will always face resource and time constraints that demand the setting of clear priorities and that may limit the incentives to invest in effective RBAs partnership. This might also be constrained by the lack of systematic dialogue and coordination. Competition for resources, divergent priorities and the mixed scales of operation, as well as the inherent difficulty in setting criteria for when and when not to explore RBAs collaboration, will inevitably pose additional challenges”*.
55. Discussions conducted with the three country teams, Government and partners during the evaluations in Cameroon also pointed out key differences among agencies as challenges for collaboration. These included different mandates, different implementation modalities, different national counterparts, different financial mechanisms and programming cycles

¹¹ Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda, November 2016, Rome.

and different priority areas for intervention. While these differences were often mentioned by interlocutors as obstacles for collaborations, a deeper analysis to understand how much these are real obstacles, or only perceived ones, has not been conducted. Indeed, some differences could also be seen as complementarities or opportunities for creating synergies. While these differences might make collaboration complex and time intensive, they do not exclude collaboration between RBAs to enhance their effectiveness in contributing to the country's development objectives.

56. Finally, to ensure collaboration, there is a need for continuous and regular dialogue among the RBAs at country level. While dialogue among the three RBA teams in Cameroon was clearly there, it was not systematic, and influenced by staff turnover and individual relationships and preferences. It is also important for the RBAs to involve Government in this dialogue and continue providing support for improving coordination in the rural and agricultural sector. Indeed, Government leadership to ensure coordination between the RBAs, to make best use of each agency's specific competencies, has not been strong over the period evaluated.

5 Conclusions

57. **There are some commonalities but also many key differences between the RBAs and how they support the Government of Cameroon.** They aim at enhancing food security and nutrition for vulnerable, rural households, have partly overlapping geographical intervention areas, and share a number of Government partners. Some intervention themes are similar, especially between WFP and FAO, while other themes are complementary.
58. **Collaboration between RBAs in Cameroon has been limited during the period covered by the evaluations.** Most collaborations identified by the evaluations consisted in RBA participation in coordination frameworks. Collaboration was more limited at the operational level, due to differences in implementation modalities, financing mechanisms and programming cycles. Dialogue among the three RBA teams in Cameroon has not been frequent, and influenced by staff turnover and individual relationships and preferences. The Government could play a much stronger leadership role in promoting collaboration between agencies.
59. **There are a number of opportunities for collaboration between the three agencies to better support Government efforts to reduce rural poverty and contribute to the achievement of the SDG1 and SDG 2.** These opportunities range from exchange of information, consultations and joint studies, to the preparation of joint sector-specific strategies, sharing of resources or services, and the development and implementation of joint activities. The Government has an important role to play in coordinating RBA support to make the best of complementarities and synergies between agencies in support of achieving its rural poverty reduction and food security objectives. Stronger Government leadership is required in coordinating the agricultural and rural development sector, and goes beyond better coordinating RBA interventions, as it involves many more development partners who are supporting Cameroon in the sector.