

165th Session of the Council – written correspondence procedure

Item 17.2: Annual Report of the WFP Executive Board on its activities in 2019

Secretariat response to written inputs from the Council

Response to Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Spain, Dominican Republic, the European Union and Canada:

WFP acknowledges with thanks the statements made by Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Spain, Dominican Republic, the European Union and Canada whose comments will be considered and addressed in the 2020 Annual Performance Report.

Response to Canada Question: In the context of funding gaps, how is WFP prioritizing programming decisions? We look forward to WFP sharing information on how efficiency gains are being measured and on future marginal gains anticipated from existing efficiency measures.

At the global level, WFP prioritizes resources for those people facing the greatest needs, which we refer to as our L-2 and L-3 emergencies (L-2 emergency response requiring regional augmentation of country level response capability; L3 emergency response mobilizing WFP global response capabilities) which represent almost 80 percent of all WFP field operations expenditures. Last year, and this year to date, our emergency operations in Yemen alone account for almost 20 percent of all our resource expenditures. Generally, WFP emergency operations encounter less funding challenges than other types of operations and programmes.

To facilitate and secure strategic decisions, WFP has established internal oversight and management mechanisms which include the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC), instrumental in making strategic decisions on multilateral funds to minimize the impact of limited resources and maximize programme outcomes. However, prioritization decisions are also discussed and articulated at other levels of the Organization, further to the global review through the SRAC: importantly, through WFP Country Office (CO) management. If received resources are insufficient, the CO management must prioritize, and it is the unconditional transfers to the most vulnerable populations that are prioritized. Furthermore, it is important to prioritize and ensure continuity for nutrition interventions to targeted populations which risk suffering setbacks in, for example, stunting and wasting.

WFP's needs-based plans, and commensurate funding requests, are based on food security assessments that identify and target vulnerable populations and currently continue to demonstrate that hunger and food insecurity is on the rise, driven by conflict, climate change, poverty, and now, the adverse effects of COVID, a fourth key driver of food insecurity. Therefore WFP continuously seeks to refine and improve how the Organization prioritizes the use of limited resources, all of which are voluntary contributions. Thus, efficiency is a core value and priority for WFP – for every dollar saved, WFP can reach more hungry people with food assistance, and in emergencies, every minute counts when it comes to reaching the most vulnerable. Striving for efficiency is more critical than ever as WFP's funding requests continues to fall short of assessed needs to assist an increasing number of people facing hunger.

WFP has established an efficiency gains methodology which will be reported in the Annual Performance Report (APR) 2020. The intent is to review the most impactful internal and interagency initiatives that demonstrate the Organization's commitment to improving efficiency and effectiveness. While the focus is on capturing efficiency gains, whether in the form of cost or time savings, the report will identify related improvements in effectiveness and environmental impact. Internal 2018 and 2019 efficiency gains reviews have helped increase the level of rigor applied to efficiency quantification methodologies, further improving the robustness and accuracy of the estimates reported. Some initiatives are in the pilot or expansion phase, expecting to show efficiency results in the coming years. Digital platforms and improved ways of working, including cross-functional efforts to simplify and automate business

processes, and innovation and the application of advanced technology in the areas of emergency preparedness and programme implementation, will all continue to move WFP towards an even more efficient and effective service delivery model.

A clear example of efficiency gains has been fuel provision in Yemen. WFP was able to ship fuel tankers to Yemen and in turn sell that fuel to key partner agencies (UNICEF and WHO) with fuel intensive operations, for example, fuel necessary for hospitals to provide electricity. The efficiency gains guaranteed a steady flow of fuel and our UN system partners were able to save on the cost of fuel compared to costs faced when having to purchase on demand or as individual agencies. The scale of this program was quite new – the United Kingdom (Department for International Development (DFID)) provided USD 10 million to be used for fuel purchases, and these funds served as ‘angel funding’, in which the initial USD 10 million provided as initial investment with an aim that these funds eventually be returned to the donor (DFID). WFP is tracking this experience with an objective to explore ways of replicating it in other countries, even if at a smaller scale.

At the interagency level, WFP serves the entire United Nations (UN) system, and as part of UN reform, the Organization is reviewing efficiency gains through a range of common services and methodologies that include the following examples: working with the United Nations Innovation Network (UNIN), the United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge (UNLOCK) and the United Nations Digital Solutions Centre (UNDSC) on innovations and the United Nations Booking Service (humanitarianbooking.org), the largest transport booking system 24/7 that assists humanitarian workers in the most remote areas to deliver last-mile assistance.