

168th Session of the Council

Item 17.2: Annual Report of the WFP Executive Board on its activities in 2020

The World Food Programme (WFP) performance highlights summarized below reflect the findings presented in the organization's 2020 Annual Performance Report (APR). The APR 2020 was discussed and endorsed by the WFP Executive Board during its Annual Session in June 2021.

In 2020, COVID-19 unleashed the worst global health emergency of the past century and caused the deepest global recession in generations, reversing decades of progress against poverty, inequality and hunger. WFP responded to the pandemic by rapidly scaling up emergency response and providing surge capacity to its field offices to ensure the continuity of existing humanitarian operations as well as increased support to national safety net systems. While responding to the first global Level 3 emergency in headquarters (COVID-19), WFP also covered 16 other Level 3 and Level 2 emergencies, working to ensure that beneficiaries could access food despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, ongoing conflict and climate crises.

WFP and partners provided direct assistance to a record estimated 115.5 million beneficiaries in 2020, 61.6 million were women and girls and 53.9 million were men and boys. WFP reached 11 percent more beneficiaries through food assistance and 37 percent more through cash-based transfers over 2019, through the distribution of 4.2 million MT of food and USD 2.1 billion in cash-based transfers (CBT). While food and CBT distributions increased substantially in some countries, in other large operations, such as Yemen, distributions were reduced due to access and funding constraints. Nutrition-specific interventions were provided to an estimated 17.3 million beneficiaries in 2020, primarily children and pregnant and lactating women and girls. School-based programmes assisted an estimated 15 million children with nutritious meals, school snacks or take-home rations. Although the pandemic resulted in school closures that severely affected on-site distributions, WFP Country Offices were able to rapidly modify delivery to take-home rations, cash transfers and vouchers.

All WFP country offices were operating through a Board-approved country strategic plan (CSP) or an interim country strategic plan (ICSP) by the end of 2020. Through these CSPs, WFP ensured the continuity of ongoing humanitarian operations and swiftly adapted in response to COVID-19. Leveraging its extensive field presence and leadership in supply chain and digital technologies, WFP prepositioned food stocks and increased local purchases to sustain ongoing operations while scaling up assistance to reach new beneficiaries affected by the pandemic, particularly in urban areas. Provision of common services by WFP expanded to support the entire humanitarian and health community by transporting essential supplies and personnel to the front lines of the pandemic and by conducting medical evacuations. This expansion enabled governments, UN and other partners to reach beneficiaries and respond to the pandemic efficiently and effectively. Moreover, WFP launched a Global Common Services platform to support the response to the pandemic, ensuring continued movement of critical cargo and staff. WFP worked in close collaboration with FAO and IFAD to conduct COVID-19 impact assessments in 11 countries to shape response plans. FAO, UNICEF and WFP published an interagency guidance note on mitigating the effects of COVID-19 on the food and nutrition of schoolchildren.

These results were achieved with generous support of WFP resource partners. WFP received record contributions of USD 8.4 billion in 2020 – 5 percent more than in 2019 – against a funding need of USD 13.7 billion, meeting 61 percent of requirements. The top five donors to WFP accounted for 74 percent of total contribution revenue, slightly less than in 2019. Contributions from the private sector increased significantly, with fundraising targets for individual giving surpassed. WFP broadened its donor base through innovative mechanisms, although flexible funds, which enable an agile and quick response to humanitarian needs, remained at 5.7 percent of the total 2020 contribution revenue. WFP identified and

measured efficiency gains through cost and time savings, as reported in the 2020 APR, realising more than USD 138 million in cost savings from the top ten efficiency gains initiatives.

Total direct expenditures, excluding indirect support costs, were USD 7.4 billion, an increase of 3 percent from 2019. Seven of the ten countries with the highest direct expenditures (Yemen, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh) were Level 3 or Level 2 emergencies. Emergency needs in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan continued to be high due to protracted conflict and climate shocks. Yemen remained the largest operation, although it experienced one of the highest reductions in expenditures, a decrease of 21 percent.

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