

## 43rd Session of the Conference

### Introduction to Item 16: United Nations/FAO World Food Programme

The World Food Programme (WFP) performance highlights summarized below reflect the findings presented in the organization's 2020 and 2021 Annual Performance Reports (APR)<sup>1</sup>, discussed and endorsed by WFP's Executive Board during the Annual sessions in June 2020 and 2021, respectively.

#### Global Context

COVID-19 unleashed the worst global health emergency in the past century in 2020 and caused the deepest global recession in generations, reversing decades of progress against poverty, inequality and hunger. In 2021, the continued effects of COVID-19, compounded by increased conflict, climate shocks and worldwide rises in the cost of living, resulted in unprecedented increases in hunger and malnutrition. In 80 countries where WFP had an operational presence, acute malnutrition almost doubled compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019, while a record 45 million people were at grave risk of famine. Significant increases in food and fuel prices and supply chain disruptions continued to severely affect people's access to food and pushed WFP's food procurement costs up by 36 percent compared to 2019.

WFP swiftly responded to the increasingly challenging context by scaling up emergency response, providing surge capacity to its field offices, ensuring the continuity of existing humanitarian and resilience operations, and expanding its provision of common services to support the entire United Nations system and other partners, to transport and medically evacuate staff and deliver essential supplies. WFP managed eight Level 3 and 11 Level 2 emergency operations in 2021<sup>2</sup>, up from six Level 3 and 10 Level 2 emergency operations in 2020, illustrating the pandemic's effect at worsening already precarious vulnerabilities and acting as a compounding factor in conflicts, economic downturns, and extreme weather events. Despite the increasing complexity of responding to such crises going into 2021, WFP provided timely life-saving assistance, particularly in Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Sudan and Yemen, where people in some areas faced famine-like conditions.

#### WFP's reach

Responding to these increasing needs, WFP and its partners directly reached<sup>3</sup> a record 128.2 million people in 2021, 11 percent more women, girls, boys and men than the 115.5 million people reached in 2020. These two years saw year-over-year increases slightly higher than the 9 percent average annual growth in the number of beneficiaries assisted during the five years of the WFP strategic plan for 2017-2021. However, the increase in the number of beneficiaries outpaced the increase in in-kind food and cash-based transfers and commodity vouchers, which, after remaining stable from 2019 to 2020, increased from 4.2 million metric tonnes of food and USD 2.1 billion in cash-based transfers (CBT) and commodity vouchers in 2020 to 4.4 million metric tonnes and USD 2.3 billion, respectively, in 2021. In the context of record food and fuel price inflation and a sharp increase in needs, WFP stretched its

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<sup>1</sup> WFP's Annual Performance Report (APR) is the main annual accountability report that presents WFP's achievements and challenges for the reporting year. The APR provides aggregated results on WFP's global performance describing who we assist, how we assist them, how funds are being used, and what results have been achieved.

APR 2020: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/annual-performance-report-2020>

APR 2021: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/annual-performance-report-2021>

<sup>2</sup> Under WFP's current Corporate Alert System (CAS) framework, the new classifications for L3 and L2 are "Corporate Scale-up Emergency" and "Corporate Attention Emergency" respectively.

<sup>3</sup> WFP estimates the number of people provided with direct assistance through in-kind food distributions, cash-based transfers (CBT), commodity vouchers and individual capacity strengthening.

resources and prioritized providing assistance to a large number of people by reducing the size of rations or the duration of assistance.

## **Programme Results**

WFP worked with its many partners to respond to record levels of food insecurity by delivering emergency food, cash-based and nutrition assistance, reinforcing national social protection systems and strengthening the resilience of communities. WFP increased two years in a row the number of beneficiaries reached through general food assistance, reaching 91 million people in 2021. Globally, 23.5 million people – primarily children and pregnant and lactating women and girls – benefitted from WFP programmes for the treatment or prevention of malnutrition in 2021, an increase of 30 percent from 2020, reflecting WFP’s vital role in 2020 and especially 2021 in responding to the increased global prevalence of moderate acute malnutrition. Approximately 15 million school children were assisted with nutritious meals, school snacks or take-home rations each year in 2020 and 2021. This represents a 13 percent reduction from 2019, reflecting both progress in moving school-based programmes to national ownership as well as significant pandemic-related challenges such as school closures, funding restrictions, and security and access issues. As part of WFP’s work on lessening the impact of future crises, WFP provided assistance to 8.7 million people through asset creation and livelihood activities in 2021, 2 million people through climate insurance or anticipatory actions, and more than 405 000 people through its smallholder agricultural market support programmes.

## **Collaboration with Rome-based Agencies**

After consolidating collaboration with the Rome-based Agencies in previous years, 2020 and 2021 saw relationships further strengthened and progress achieved in delivering results. Areas of collaboration included the global Food Security Cluster, peacebuilding, early warning systems, resilience and social cohesion, rural women’s economic empowerment, micro-insurance, South–South and Triangular Cooperation and COVID-19 impact assessments, among others. 2021 also marked the completion of the first phase of the joint programme on rural women’s economic empowerment, implemented in seven countries by FAO, IFAD, WFP and others, which, since its inception in 2014, has stimulated increases in agricultural production, generating millions (USD) in sales for individuals and households.

## **Financial resources**

WFP, as a voluntarily funded organization, has been able to achieve the reported results due to the support provided by the WFP Executive Board, donors and resource partners. In 2021, donors responded to unprecedented needs by increasing their contributions to a record USD 9.6 billion –15 percent more than in 2020 (USD 8.4 billion)– against funding needs of USD 14.8 billion, meeting 65 percent of requirements, slightly higher than in 2020. While WFP’s ten largest donors accounted for 79 percent of contributions in 2021, WFP made progress in both 2020 and 2021 in diversifying its funding bases through partnerships with national governments, international financial institutions (IFIs), and the private sector, increasing its share of flexible funding in the process as well.

Direct expenditures in 2021, excluding indirect support costs, totalled USD 8.6 billion. While both 2020 and 2021 saw an increased share of funds being allocated to crisis response (a similar trend as in previous years, reaching 85 percent in 2021), the level of expenditures on resilience building and root causes continued to increase. This reflects the growing humanitarian needs being met by WFP in line with its commitment to saving lives, and WFP’s efforts in maintaining progress on preventative activities for building resilience and addressing root causes to lessen the impact of future crises.

Results reported in the APRs for 2020 and 2021 demonstrate WFP’s efforts in addressing the life-saving needs of women, men, boys and girls caught up in emergencies, as well as preparing communities to withstand disasters, and restoring livelihoods in post-crisis environments. With complex conflicts and

climate-driven emergencies on the rise, the global requirements for WFP's assistance together with its funding needs, continue to grow.

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