

# **Progress in accelerating global actions for a world without poverty and implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)**

## **Input by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)**

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### **1. Adapting to unprecedented and ever-growing cycle of crises and unprecedent needs**

Global hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition continued to rise in 2022 due to multiple overlapping challenges posed by evolving economic, social, environmental, and political conditions. To respond to this ever-changing landscape, the World Food Programme (WFP) stepped up its operations to a record level in 123 countries and territories.

The multifaceted layers/causes of poverty can be seen through many dimensions which include food security, economic context, conflict, and climate. In 2023, WFP estimates that 345 million people are acutely food insecure across 79 countries with WFP operational presence and where data is available. This demonstrates an increase of about 200 million people from the pre-COVID-19 level. In 2021, the number of chronically food insecure people rose to 828 million<sup>1</sup>. In addition, malnutrition has remained high with 44.5 million people stunted and 143.5 million people wasted worldwide. Hunger has also grown more deeply entrenched. About 43.3 million people across 53 countries face severe hunger emergencies as of April 2023 of which close to 850,000 people mainly in countries with high level of fragility and humanitarian crisis.

The continued war in Ukraine is likely to exacerbate the already severe acute food insecurity. In 81 countries where WFP works, acute hunger is expected to rise by 47 million people if the Ukraine crisis continues – a 17 percent leap. The conflict has continued to keep global food, energy, and fertilizer prices high, affecting domestic markets and reducing access to food for the most vulnerable especially in import-dependent countries. Food price hikes also raise the cost of WFP's operations, reducing the ability to serve those in need just when it is most required.

In 2022, WFP was able to reach about 160 million people with food, cash, and nutrition, and anticipates it will reach up to 172 million people in 2023. The fight against poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition is facing growing challenges including due to the widening gap between financing needs and the available resources.

### **2. Expanding social protection systems to achieve SDG1 and SDG2**

The slowdown in the global economy is expected to continue in 2023 due to the ripple effect of the Ukraine crisis, as well as the rising cost of credit and persistently high prices of key commodities such as energy, fertilizer, and food. Economies with a high dependence on trade and external financing are particularly vulnerable to these turbulent commercial and financial markets. Rising unemployment, inflation, commodity prices, and debt are driving families into multidimensional poverty, including in countries that have not been traditional recipients of humanitarian aid.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO (2023). [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#)

WFP supports national SDG1 and SDG2 targets through social protection systems such as cash-based transfers, commodity vouchers, and school-based nutrition and health interventions. WFP's social protection work emphasises on people's increased access to national social protection systems to meet food security, nutrition, and other essential needs; and helping them manage shocks. WFP is positioned to support the expansion of social protection programmes, leveraging its field presence and operational expertise. WFP can support governments to rapidly deliver and scale up social protection programmes in challenging environments.

### **3. Promoting sustainable food systems**

WFP works to build resilience to shocks and stressors, reducing effects of recurrent crises and addressing root causes of persistent vulnerabilities. WFP tailors programmes to its target group, considering the shocks and stressors they are exposed to, the capacity of national governments and partners, community livelihoods and other contextual factors. The future of food and sustainable agriculture relies on the global community's effectiveness in implementing a food systems approach in all interventions. In 2023, WFP plans to undertake interventions aimed at building sustainable food systems and increasing smallholder productivity and incomes with anticipated financing of USD 1 billion and USD 425 million, respectively.

### **4. Mitigating conflict through peace building efforts and humanitarian diplomacy**

Conflict remains the main driver of hunger in most of the world's food crises. Conflict has impacted the fight against poverty negatively; between 2010 and 2020, the number of state-based armed conflicts almost doubled, after progressively fallen since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Conflict limits people's ability to meet their food requirements, disrupts access to basic services and limits humanitarian actors from reaching communities in need. Forced displacement is expected to continue expanding with UNHCR projecting about 117 million people to be forcibly displaced or stateless in 2023<sup>2</sup>, further aggravating food insecurity.

WFP's efforts to gain access in contexts of armed conflict have seen some progress in averting famine in Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Burkina Faso. The biggest breakthroughs were in Yemen and Ethiopia where tremendous returns were achieved with ceasefires. However, the rapid deteriorations in Sudan and Burkina Faso remain a huge concern. The fighting in Sudan has triggered internal and external displacements. As thousands seek safety and necessities in neighbouring countries, many of which are dealing with multiple crises of their own (Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt) concern about rising food insecurity is growing.

### **5. Addressing climate change and the intensification of natural hazards**

Climate extremes have hit especially hard on those who are least equipped to cope, recover and adapt, worsening the hunger and poverty situations. Madagascar, Mozambique, and Malawi suffered from the impacts of Cyclone Freddy, while persistent dryness has affected Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and parts of Zimbabwe. The historic flooding in Pakistan is also one of the most devastating climate shocks destroying lives and livelihoods. The five-season drought in parts of Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia has pushed millions to the brink of starvation.

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR (2023). [Global Appeal](#).

WFP is monitoring the possibility of an El Niño phenomenon in the second half of 2023, which would likely increase global temperatures and disrupt regular weather patterns and food production. As La Nina and El Niño events continue to play out interchangeably, causing drastic weather patterns, the impacts of successive droughts will be felt for years to come.

WFP has been working with governments on shock responsive systems including in the Sahel countries of Mali, Niger, and Mauritania. It uses a multi-layered Corporate Alert System for early warning and early action through real-time monitoring system and Advanced Disaster Analysis and Mapping. WFP is also supporting the African Union implement Africa’s Climate and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan.

## **6. Fighting poverty in fragile and humanitarian contexts**

The prevalence of poverty correlates with the level of fragility and prolonged humanitarian challenges. Between 1998 and 2019, poverty declined except in two regions. It increased by 27.5 million (7 percent) and 25.5 million (69 percent) in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, respectively. These two regions host nine of the ten most fragile and conflict affected countries.

Fragile contexts accounted for 73 percent of people living in extreme poverty in 2022, which is projected to increase to 86 percent by 2030, even without accounting for the impact of the Ukraine crisis. Fragile and conflict-affected countries host nearly one billion people facing multiple challenges.

To make a sustainable impact, WFP repositioned itself to focus on the changing lives agenda by designing and implementing interventions that are aimed at enhancing resilience capacities and reducing vulnerabilities. WFP has been supporting governments in fragile and humanitarian contexts including the Sahel Region and Madagascar to change lives<sup>3</sup>. Promising early results showcase the importance of addressing the root causes of poverty through complementary resilience building initiatives that help create enabling environment and opportunities of their choice for communities.

## **7. Policy messages and Recommendations**

- Leaving no one behind requires complementary efforts and a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development. Coordination and collaboration is needed to achieve the SDGs by 2030.
- There is a need for broad-based political action at the local level to address the drivers of poverty and hunger. This includes conflict mitigation and humanitarian access through to longer term investments in climate action that supports developing nations, and greater investments in social protection, food systems and resilience.
- There is need to scale up sustainable finance by aligning the global economic activity to the 2030 Agenda. This includes increasing investments to scale social protection programs, such as cash transfers, food assistance, and school feeding. These immediate solutions can help reduce poverty while fostering economic stability and long-term efficiency.

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<sup>3</sup>WFP (2023). [Integrated Resilience in the Sahel](#)